THE
MODERN CHURCHMAN

By identifying the new learning with heresy, you make orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance.—*Erasmus*

A State without the means of change is without the means of its conservation.—*Edmund Burke*

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CONFERENCE SERMON

CHRISTIANITY, A FAITH FOR THE WORLD

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'Mercy and truth are met together: righteousness and peace have kissed each other.'
Psalm 85, 10.

CHRISTIANITY, a faith for the world; this is the title for the excellent series of meetings for the Modern Churchmen's Conference this year. In this opening address, let us consider some of the questions we should have in mind as we approach the various meetings. Let us first take this phrase, a Faith for the World, and ask what qualities we expect in a faith, if it is to be adequate for the needs of our contemporary world.

Certainly any faith which is to be adequate for our present day must be conceived in world terms. With the rapidity of modern transport and communication, the world has become a place in which races and nations live as neighbours on one another's doorsteps. Neighbours must meet as friends or quarrel. If races and nations quarrel, then they have in their hands the new and terrible instruments of destruction which modern science has discovered. It is not surprising that in such a world the Lambeth Conference this year spoke continually of the need for reconciliation.

A faith for the world must also be universal, in the sense that it meets the ordinary needs of ordinary people of every nation and race. It must deal with the issues that vex the minds of ordinary people; it must be concerned with issues which affect our common humanity in its psychological and sociological aspects, and which transcend the differences of race and nation.

For such a world we need *a faith*. Faith in one aspect means a body of ideas, which are true to reality and express the nature of the world in which we live. Such a faith furnishes that room of the soul which we

call our mind, and gives a sense of stability and order and coherence. Men and women to-day in every race and nation are hungry for a faith in this sense. We live in an unsettled and uncertain world. Previous generations passed from the Stone Age to the Bronze Age and the Iron Age, with a leisurely thousand years or so to make the necessary adjustment. We have passed in breathless haste almost within a generation from the steam age to the oil age and the atomic age. No sooner have we begun to adjust to one pattern of society than a new day dawns demanding different adjustments. It is not surprising that men demand some anchor of the soul to which to cling, amid the rapidly changing scene that surrounds them. Whether or not they know it, men and women everywhere are hungry for a theology.

This is a very dangerous situation. All too easily in their quest for security of mind people may snatch at certainty too soon. They will take their thoughts about God and his world at second hand, without going through the burden of thought with which they might earn a sure faith for themselves. Hungry for certainty, they may snatch at spurious substitutes, and so miss the reality of a faith which shall be firm and true. Yet while the situation is dangerous for these reasons, in itself the demand for a sure and settled faith is legitimate and must be met. We all need landmarks that are sure and clear, to guide our steps through the ever-changing scene.

In the New Testatment, in the later writings, faith has this meaning of a system of ideas, as, for instance, when Jude writes of 'the faith which was once delivered unto the saints' (*Jude* iii). While, however, this is one meaning of faith, it is not its only nor its original meaning. In the New Testament, before faith became a tradition and a system of ideas, it stood rather for a quality of life. In the classic definition of faith in the Epistle to the Hebrews, Abraham 'went out, not knowing whither he went' (*Hebrews* xi, 8). In this sense also we need a faith for the world. We too must launch out into the unknown world of automation, of new and yet more rapid forms of transport, of atomic power, not knowing whither we go, and trusting only, like Abraham, that somewhere ahead there is a 'city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God' (*Hebrews* xi, 10).

Faith in this sense means courage, and the assurance that there is power in God to face and overcome every force of evil. Our Lord held up the Roman soldier as the example of faith, just because he had the certain trust that there was power to overcome a sickness of his child. There is that quality of faith when a soldier of our modern world, Marshal Foch, said in the First World War, 'Mon centre cède, ma droite recule. Situation excellente. J'attaque.' There is the same quality of faith in the saying which was adopted by Lieut.-General Irwin as the motto of the Eastern Army in the Second World War, but which was originally the response

of Controller-General Calonne to the requests of Marie Antoinette: 'If it is but difficult, it is done; if it is impossible, it shall be done.' It is this quality of courage and conviction which we need, if we are to face and tackle the tasks of our day.

Can we then say that Christianity is the faith for the world? Do not let us be too quick in saying Yes. It would be very easy to say Yes in a shallow, pietistic way, without understanding what we are really saying. There are many people in the world who would not say Yes, and we must hear and heed what they have to say. We do not need to be apologetic for the Christian religion in the modern, debased sense of that world. We do need Christian Apologists in the original sense, who will hear and heed the objections of the surrounding world and who, having heard, will present the Christian faith in its full relevance to the contemporary world, in language which that world can understand.

Christianity, a faith for the world? No, it cannot be that, because it is a Western religion. That is what many people are saying, as amid the resurgence of ancient faiths men claim that Islam is the religion for the Arab world, Buddhism for Ceylon, Hinduism for India. It is not enough to answer that Christ was born in Palestine, though that indeed is part of the answer. We must admit that in the missionary expansion of the last hundred years, we have all too often presented Christ to other races in Western dress, and made him appear a stranger in their land. In case he himself does not do so, let me quote the words of one of our speakers, the Rev. D. M. Paton, in his book, *Christian Missions and the Judgment of God*: 'The entire structure and ethos of the Church in China was, with minor much-paraded exceptions, Western. Prayer books are in the main direct, not to say crudely literal, translations of the original . . . Church architecture is mainly a matter of brick boxes, with odds and ends of embellishments from the Gothic revival. One could not expect high office—succeed a missionary or become a bishop—unless he had at least a Western-style education, and preferably rejoiced in a Western degree. The structure of diocesan organization and accounts was based on Western models, and is grotesquely complicated for the numbers involved, and the relative simplicity of Church life' (*Op. cit.* 37).

A faith for the world must be capable of reconciling the conflicts of the world. Christianity cannot be such a faith, for it has manifestly failed to reconcile the conflicts. This, too, people of other races and nations are saying, and we must hear and heed. Christianity has been for centuries the traditional religion of the nations of Europe. They have not conspicuously lived at peace with one another; and twice in our day it is they who have plunged the world into world-wide war.

The charge that Christianity is unable to reconcile conflicts becomes more serious still when we look not only at its impact on the world, but at the life of the Church itself. The recent Lambeth Conference Report

on the Reconciling of Conflicts between and within Nations has to make the admission: 'Our sorry inability to find the reconciling truth that shall restore visible unity to Christ's Church, weakens our witness to the love of the one God and the one Lord. It therefore behoves us as Christians to speak with great humility, since we are ourselves inflicted with the disease for which we seek a cure' (*Op. cit.* ii, 121).

While these words were being drafted, in another room the Committee on Church Unity and the Church Universal wrote independently: ' "Physician, heal thyself." Such is the challenge which comes with ever-increasing urgency to the Church to-day. As the Church seeks, in obedience to Christ, to proclaim the word of reconciliation in the midst of a world torn by divisions and conflicts, to proclaim effectively the Gospel of God's reconciling love to the world, the Church must manifest in its own life the healing and reconciling power of the Word it proclaims' (*Op. cit.* ii, 20). The sociological pattern of divided nations is in fact precisely similar to that of divided denominations. In each case there is a group of people cherishing their own traditions, jealously guarding their own autonomy and sovereignty, suspicious of those beyond their own group, unwilling to co-operate, if ever such co-operation should challenge their own autonomy.

There is, however, another, and perhaps even more serious place, where men are asking whether Christianity is a faith for the world. Faith, we noticed, means courage to face the unknown and wrestle with the forces of evil. Christianity has for generations been the dominant religion of the democracies; yet precisely in the West and America there seems to-day to be a certain lack of nerve. That acute observer of our modern scene, Erich Fromm, wrote in 1942 on the Fear of Freedom. 'The position in which the individual finds himself in our period had already been foreseen by visionary thinkers in the nineteenth century. Kierkegaard describes the helpless individual torn and tormented by doubts, overwhelmed by the feeling of aloneness and insignificance' (*Op. cit.*, p. 114). That description is all too true of a generation which has accepted Kierkegaard as its prophet. In his more recent book, *The Sane Society*, Dr. Fromm has written: 'The aim of the whole socio-economic development of the Western world is that of the materially comfortable life, relatively equal distribution of wealth, stable democracy and peace, and the very countries which have come closest to this aim show the most severe signs of mental unbalance' (quoted in the *King-Hall News-Letter* for 3rd September, 1958).

In all these various charges there is a challenge which we must hear and heed. If we do so, though only if we do so, then the realistic facing of our weakness may become the very ground of our Christian hope. 'He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my

infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me' (II *Cor.* xii, 9). That is the nature of the Christian Gospel, and the ever-recurring miracle of grace. When we face and accept our weakness (though again, only when we do so), then God in Christ takes the very faults and failures which are on the debit side of life, and transfers them to the credit side. This will prove true of just those weaknesses which we have been noticing. In the very recognition that the Christ we presented was clothed in Western dress, we shall be compelled to ask again what are the external trappings of our religion, and what its essential message, and therein we ourselves shall come to see Christ in new vision. Gradually, if all too slowly, we are coming before him from the midst of our various communions, and allowing him to draw us into new unity. Just in the measure that we allow that to happen, the Church will be able to go out to the world in new conviction and power, saying: The conflicts which divide men into their rival, jealous groups can be healed; we know it, because under Christ we have proved it within our own life.

It is Christ himself we present to the world, not that pale parody which we so often misname Christianity. As one of his first and greatest missionaries declared: 'We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake' (II *Cor.* iv, 5). We preach not ourselves; that is fortunate, or it would be a very shallow and poor little religion that we preached. Sometimes we preachers do fall into the error of substituting ourselves, our own little religious foibles, our pet ideas and pettier prejudices, for the Gospel of Christ. If we say, 'Christianity, a Faith for the World', I hope we really mean Christ, a Faith for the World. It is the God revealed in Christ who over and over again comes to the world with the promise of new life, the promise that his grace is sufficient, for his strength is made perfect despite and amid our weakness.

What is it then that Christ offers to the world? If I were to find one verse in the Bible which most briefly and clearly answers that question, I think I should say the verse from the psalm: 'Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.'

Mercy and truth are met together. This is the great Johannine theme. 'The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ' (*St. John* i, 17). Forgiveness makes reality possible. A true theology corresponds to a healthy psychology. It is precisely the theology of Forgiveness which is the answer to the flight from reality, which is symbolized by Adam hiding in the garden, and studies in all the modern psychological research into repression as a factor in mental illness. The great dramatists of our age have been continually playing on the same theme, whether or not they do so in explicitly religious language. In his latest play, 'The Elder Statesman', T. S. Eliot pictures a character who has played a part on the scene of life, hiding from all the memories and shame which are his real existence. The memories of his own past appear

in characters, who taunt him with the reality from which he has been hiding. Pathetically at one point he asks his daughter if she could still love him, if he stripped off the actor's clothes of the part he has played and admitted his real life. Yet just in that admission mercy and truth are meeting. Here is the essential realism of the Christ, who challenges the unreality of the hypocrites of his day, who 'appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness' (*Matt.* xxiii, 27). Through his forgiveness the Christ brings the recovery of reality and therein our healing.

In the Christ also, 'righteousness and peace have kissed each other'. Peace, like joy, is never found when we seek it directly for its own sake. That is the great mistake of our present world, as indeed of all generations. In a mad rush for pleasure we may find a certain kind of superficial temporary happiness, but we do not find joy. Joy is a by-product, when our whole nature is fulfilled in working out a purpose to which we feel committed and called. If joy is thus a by-product, that is not less true of peace. Here also we make a great mistake if we seek peace for its own sake, but do not bring out into the open and face the underlying causes, which all the time are making for war. As Isaiah saw, we have to seek first justice; then, and only then, peace will follow as effect from cause. 'Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places' (*Isaiah* xxxii, 16, 18).

As a true theology corresponds to a healthy psychology, so also it corresponds to a healthy sociology. We live in a world of vast mass pressures, a world which David Riesman has described under the apt title, 'The Lonely Crowd'. It is a world in which continually people 'have used the noise of the others to deaden the noise of self' (*Op. cit.*, p. 171). In the recent important study on loneliness, published by the National Council of Social Service, the foreword says: "The very discoveries which have made it possible for men to live together in vast urban communities, have also made it all too easy for the individual to sink into isolation and insignificance in the face of the monster impersonal machine he has created.'

Precisely into that kind of world Christ comes with the double answer, both to the mass man, and to the lonely individual. Over against the mass mentality he lifts the individual out of the crowd. At the central act of Christian worship, to each one severally the words are spoken, 'Who died for thee.' With those words the individual acquires the significance, which he had lost in the secular society. At the same time, while the individual is given significance, he is called out into fellowship. 'This is my blood of the New Testament, which he shed for you *and for many*';

the words are a reminder that for others also Christ died, and that we are called to go out and serve them for his sake. Thus there is born the true community, in which the individual does not lose, but rather finds and expresses his liberty.

That is the goal of Christian sociology. It is the way in which Christ meets the universal need of men. Because it is so important to see it clearly, we may add one or two more quotations in illustration. Daniel Williams, for instance, has written: 'Neither individualism nor totalitarianism can satisfy the human spirit. Desperate men swing to one extreme or the other. . . . The community of the Church unites personal freedom and shared life in one social organism' (*Interpreting Theology*, p. 126). J. H. Oldham has written similarly: 'The fundamental fact of human existence is neither the individual as such, nor the aggregate as such. Each considered by itself is a mighty obstruction. The individual is a fact of existence in so far as he steps into a living relation with other individuals' (*Life is Commitment*, p. 40). Erich Fromm writes in the book to which we earlier referred: 'Is there a state of positive freedom in which the individual exists as an independent self and yet is not isolated but united with the world, with other men, and nature? We believe that there is a positive answer, that the process of growing freedom does not constitute a vicious circle, and that men can be free and yet not alone, critical and yet not filled with doubts, independent and yet an integral part of mankind' (*The Fear of Freedom*, p. 222).

This then is the message which we take out to mankind. Christ is Saviour and Lord; in Him there is healing for the individual, and healing for society, if he will accept it at his hands. Yet at the end there must be a final word of warning on the spirit in which we go. Doors will be slammed in our face whenever we approach others in a 'holier than thou' attitude. Our friend and former member, E. C. Dewick, taught us that we must approach people of other faiths with the love that is 'eager to believe the best' (as Moffat translated the words of St. Paul, I *Cor.* xiii, 6). We go out, seeking the Christ, who is already present with those to whom we go, before ever we mention his name. We go out, seeking to quarry the rough rock for the vein of gold, which is already present within it.

In this spirit also we shall play our part, in seeking to heal the divisions between those who call themselves Christians. The divisions of Christendom will not be healed while members of different communions approach one another in a 'holier than thou' attitude. We have to abandon this attitude utterly as we kneel seeking forgiveness at the feet of Christ; then, and only then, we shall be led into unity by his Spirit.

The lesson is not unnecessary for those who accept, as I myself should, the name liberal. Amid the mass pressures of the modern world we desperately need to recover a true liberty of spirit. We shall not do so if those who call themselves liberal meet in little groups apart, with a 'holier

than thou' attitude to all the rest of the world. We have to go out and laugh and learn, in all humility sharing our vision and learning from the vision of others, so that together we may be led a little nearer into the presence of the Christ.

In that spirit, refreshed and renewed, we shall proclaim the Christ as Saviour of the World. In his name we shall accept ourselves, and seek to share with others the forgiveness he came to bring. In his name we shall seek to build a world where 'mercy and truth are met together', and where 'righteousness and peace' may kiss each other, and the effect of righteousness may be quietness and assurance for ever.

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY AND THE GREAT RELIGIONS

By the Dean of Liverpool, the Very Rev. F. W. Dillistone, D.D.

If Christian Theology were a well-defined measuring apparatus like a yard-stick or a stop-watch and other religions were easily discernible entities contained within the space-time continuum, then our task of comparison would be relatively simple. But not only are the great religions of the world huge and sprawling complex phenomena impossible to analyze with any precision or even to describe in any comprehensive way: it is also the case that Christian theology is a term of the widest possible reference, covering as it does the constantly repeated attempts in the course of Christian History to express in words the significance of God's self-revelation to mankind in and through Jesus Christ. At first sight it might appear that there is virtually no basis of comparison or, to put it in another way, no line of fruitful relationship.

Yet amidst all the complexity and indefiniteness, there is one common factor. Christian theology is always trying to bear witness to God—God in his essential Being, God in his effective Action. Religion, wherever it is found, is the expression of man's stretching out beyond the circle of his own ordinary existence and activity towards a reality which is most conveniently designated his god. Thus in the most general terms we may say that Christian theology is ever seeking to give more adequate symbolic form to that reality transcending man's own existence which he has dimly discerned and in varying degrees acknowledged. At the very least we may say that Christian theology is the attempt to give a coherent and convincing answer to the question of God's existence which has arisen in the general experience of mankind. Some would prefer to go further and to say that Christian theology is the attempt to give ultimacy to those perceptions of and cravings for the Beyond which have been so marked a feature of man's historical development.

Having given this brief introduction to the problem, I want now to become more specific and to look first at the main types of theology which have appeared in the course of Christian history for, as we shall see, there tends to be a difference of attitude to other religions amongst the proponents of these varying forms. I shall define the four that I have in mind as the cosmic, the historical, the psychological and the existential. Most systems of Christian theology have tried to give some attention at least to each of these types, and yet when any particular system in the past or in the present is examined carefully it is usually found that the theogian's interest is slanted in one or other of these directions.

Taking first what I have called *cosmic theology*. A more common designation, though I think a less satisfactory one, is natural theology. Its dominant concern is man and his cosmic environment. What is there in his experience of the external world which raises the question of the

Beyond? Are there marks of order in the universe? Is there discernible a widespread tendency to seek a goal or goals? Are there indications that the universe is not self-contained and self-existent but rather that it has been brought into existence by some transcendent power? How do the phenomena which man sees live and move and have their being? And how did the unusual and extraordinary take their shape? Why does the character of one place differ from that of another. These are simple and obvious questions but they are basic to man's experience of his universe at all times and in all places. Even when he has not formulated the question in any precise terms he has again and again shown by his behaviour that he has answered the question in terms of a life-force or creative urge or self-expression conceived of as divine. This transcendent factor in his external world must be acknowledged, as far as possible understood, and given due place in the pattern of his own life in society.

How then does the cosmic theology of the Christian tradition differ from that of other religions? Chiefly it would seem by holding together in a remarkable proportion and harmony elements which may be found in isolated or embryonic form elsewhere. A living, purposive, creator-God: this affirmation may certainly be found in Judaism and Islam, and it is not entirely absent from the ancient theologies of Egypt and Greece. A God who creates through his word or his wisdom or his spirit: this affirmation may also be found in Judaism and the famous doctrine of a created order governed by a divine logos had its home in Greece. In India and Greece there were cosmogonies of a most ingenious kind, but search where we will there is nothing to compare with the remarkable New Testament faith that the living God created all things through the agency of his Son and for his sake. 'For by him all things were created: and he is before all things and by him all things consist.'

In the main the cosmic theology of the Christian tradition has not condemned or repudiated the cosmologies of other religions. It has seen them rather as imperfect recognitions and understandings of that truth which in Christ has found its unique fulfilment. It is true that a systematically formulated impersonal monism is incompatible with the Christian belief in a living personal creator-God. But a theoretical monism has never, I think, gained wide acceptance. More commonly men have become aware of a power or a rational agency or a principle of harmony and proportion at work in the universe and have expressed this awareness through some form of outward acknowledgment. Christian theologians have not found it impossible—indeed they have often found it congenial—to regard these varied forms of awareness as pointers towards the comprehensive cosmic theology which has grown out of God's self-revelation through his personal Word, the Christ. Perhaps the key-note of Christian cosmic theology has been *fulfilment*—fulfilment of all those gropings and speculations and experimentations and observations which have marked man's

relations with his universe and which, it is claimed, only receive coherence and meaning when integrated into the far-reaching affirmation of Christian faith: I believe in one God the Father, maker of heaven and earth, And in one Lord Jesus Christ, By whom all things were made.

I turn secondly to what I have called *historical* theology. Again there has been a more common designation which for me raises more questions than it answers—namely, the title revealed theology. Whatever we call it, its dominant concern is man and the stream of history in which he stands. What is there in his knowledge of the past which raises the question of the Beyond? Can patterns or rhythms be discerned in the story of human development? Has there been a movement which can legitimately be described as upwards or forwards? Are there evidences of incursions into history of influences or powers which cannot be included within any known category of human possibility? How are the critical turning-points of history to be charted and explained? Above all, is there any current of history flowing within the wider stream which claims our special attention as being so different from the rest that it challenges us to enquire whether a more than human hand may be guiding it towards its destiny?

Such questions about the past have become the more pressing as man's resources for unravelling the mysteries of his heritage have become more copious. His first historical concern has ever been with the community to which he is most intimately related: the family, the village, the tribe. He treasures stories from the past and especially those which tell of extraordinary events brought about, it would appear, by some superhuman agency. But with the widening of horizons which travel, contacts with other communities, and improvements in historical recording make possible, the questions concerning the past become more complex and in particular the task of distinguishing between divine and human interventions the more difficult. The phenomenal extensions of historical knowledge which the past 150 years have witnessed have resulted in widespread uncertainty about the Divine activity in history, and there is no clear understanding of what form that activity would have been likely to take.

What can be claimed with some confidence is that during this period no religious faith has taken the question of history more seriously than has Christianity. Partly this has been due to its own treasured witness to the Divine interventions in human affairs which the Bible itself contains. Partly it has been due to the spectacular outreach of Western secular civilization which opened paths for the use of the Christian evangelist. Christianity has become more vividly aware of its own place in man's historical development and of the crucial importance which its witness to a Divine ingression into history plays in its own theology. Only slowly and haltingly have the other religions begun to ask wider historical questions, and meanwhile two pseudo-religions holding very definite views of

the nature of the historical process have swept across the world. Thus in its interpretation of history it is not so much the traditional religions (with the possible exception of Judaism) that Christianity has to challenge, but rather the two secular faiths—Communism and Scientific Humanism—which have won so large a following in our contemporary world.

How then does the historical theology of the Christian faith differ from that of other systems which take history seriously? The crucial difference, it seems to me, is to be found in the nature of the event, or cluster of events, which is believed to have been the centre and crisis of all history. For example, in the faith of Judaism the crisis to which memory constantly returns, through which hope is constantly refreshed, and by which community bonds are constantly strengthened, is the wonderful deliverance from the power of Pharoah and the Red sea into the liberty of a new existence under the rule of Yahweh. It was a crisis which had as its main features the power of Yahweh to overthrow tyrants and to curb the forces of nature and to send his people forward to the attainment of their true destiny. Or, to take a more modern example, in the view of scientific humanism the crisis of all history has been the deliverance of man from the shackles of ignorance and superstition through the rise of modern science. In a vague and mysterious way science is the superhuman agent which controls nature and enables men to rise to ever higher standards of material living.

But for the Christian faith the central crisis is the creative activity of a living person who by his death negated the lusts for power and for material possession which have dogged individuals and groups throughout human history and by his resurrection opened the gateway into a progressive attainment of the glorious liberty of the children of God. Thus the altogether significant event in history is not the exercise of a power capable of breaking through certain impediments of nature and of tyrannical social systems for the benefit of a limited section of mankind but rather the exercise of a sacrificial love capable of breaking through every form of sin and death and thereby bringing deliverance to the whole human race.

The relation of this historical theology of the Christian tradition to other interpretations of history is not as simple as was the case with cosmic theology. With its central criterion of death and resurrection, judgment and salvation, it cannot simply regard other criteria as imperfect versions of its own. Rather it is bound to bring all other interpreting centres of history under the judgment of Calvary and Easter Day. It cannot accept a nationalistic or a deterministic or a materialistic interpretation of history, even when it is surrounded by an aura of religious fervour. In bearing witness to the faith that the essential mark of God's intervention in history is the emergence of new life through death, it cannot avoid applying this test to every other religious interpretation of history. It is true it must do so in the spirit of the Cross to which it bears witness. But the key-note of

the relationship between Christian Theology and other religions in this area must, I think, be *judgment*. The history of all mankind stands under the judgment of the Living God, and only in the faith of the resurrection is there ground for salvation and hope.

Thirdly, there is *psychological* theology, which has sometimes been called mystical theology. Man is concerned with what goes on in his own heart. Is there any facet of his inner experience which raises the question of the Beyond? What is the significance of the scale of inner values which he at least dimly recognizes? Why should there be such a consistent and such a widely diffused urge towards the attainment of the good, the beautiful, the true? What again is the meaning of the sense of awe which in certain circumstances awakens in the soul? Or the sense of complete and utter dependence which at times takes possession of man's inner life? Are there patterns and rhythms of inner experience which suggest the operation of some transcendent factor? And what is the explanation of the experience so common in life of an inner voice calling for some course of action and brooking no delay?

Questions such as these belong to no single period or culture. They were being asked by Jeremiah and Socrates, by St. Paul and St. Augustine, by Sankara and Schleiermacher. But they have taken on an altogether new urgency since the dawning of the era of modern psychological research. Much that was formerly attributed to the Divine is now traced to the activity of the subconscious. Much that was regarded as mysterious and awesome is now regarded as a commonplace of abnormal psychology. All varieties of religious experience are open to the examination of the psychologist, and the results of his observations and analyses must be carefully weighed. Yet in the last resort he can give no certain judgment on the question whether a particular pattern of inner experience is the result of a divine influence or operation. For example, it is still possible for a believer to affirm that all inward promptings towards the unification of the personality or stimuli towards the discerning of final meaning are in fact the workings of the Divine Spirit in human life.

How then has the Christian theologian approached the problem of religious experience in general and of the Christian experience in particular? In the main he has, I think, been ready to see the evidence of the working of the Divine Spirit in the inspiration towards the good, in the passion for the true, in the wondering response to the beautiful, in concentration upon transcendent unity, wherever these may be found. In other words, wherever man has been drawn outwards beyond the enclosed circle of his own immediate needs and interests—towards transcendent existence, towards transcendent value—there, it is claimed, the Divine Spirit has been working in his heart. But all such movements in man's inner being, it is further claimed, can only receive coherence and meaning as they are given a *personal* direction within the unique revelation of the Divine Son of God.

For in spite of a certain scepticism on the part of historical critics regarding what may be known of the self-consciousness of Jesus of Nazareth, there does surely emerge in the New Testament a striking picture of what Paul Tillich calls the New Being in Christ. Much of the experience of his inner life is hidden from us, and yet if one thing stands out clearly it is his consistent consciousness of living in a filial relationship with the God who is the source both of existence and of value. The Beatitudes, the Temptations, the Lord's Prayer, the Parables, the Sayings, all reveal the heart of one who gathered every aspect of human life into unity and value and meaning by transmuting it within the filial relationship of a personal love. All partial aspirations and devotions find their true integration within the perfect self-offering of the Son to the Father. 'We beheld his glory as of an only begotten son with a father: full of grace and truth.'

This, however, is not the whole of the Christian claim. The Christian theologian goes further to say that this essential pattern of experience has been reproduced and is still being reproduced in human life wherever the attention of the soul is directed in faith towards the eternal Son of God whose image has been disclosed before the eyes of men. It is no longer the case of some partial vision of goodness or beauty stirring the heart and drawing it towards perfection—though such experiences are obviously still possible. Rather it is the case that the Perfect has been brought to a focus in a human career and that an inner process of identification with the perfect can no longer take place. All this is expressed in varying ways in the New Testament. 'For me to live is Christ.' 'I live yet not I but Christ liveth in me.' 'Ye have received the spirit of sonship.' 'As many as received him to them gave he the right to be called the sons of God.'

Again and again the assurance is given that the Divine Spirit is ever at work to reproduce in human character the pattern of sonship which was manifested uniquely and definitively in the life of the incarnate Son of God. And indeed in one remarkable passage in the Epistle to the Romans it is claimed that the object and goal of the universal travail which the Divine Spirit animates is simply the bringing to birth of a new race of sons of God whose image and character will be comparable to that of the perfect Son of God himself. The psychological theology of the Christian tradition, therefore, does not repudiate other forms of religious aspiration and experience which the world has known: it seeks only to display the image of unification and fulfilment which it believes has been once for all revealed in the life-pattern of Jesus the Christ.

Our fourth category I have called existential theology. It is concerned with questions such as these. Is man tied and bound by the chains of his past or is there any way of creative adventure still open to him in the present? In particular is there any way of overcoming his sense of alienation—alienation from his world, from his fellow-man, from his true self?

And is there any possibility of overcoming the limitations of his own existence imposed by the will of the other, by the entail of his own heritage, by the inevitability of physical death? Does individuality mean anything at all, or is the mass the only ultimate reality? Has the moment, the immediate now any significance or does the still-gliding stream of time swallow up all separateness within its undifferentiated unity? Is there any longer any place for action, for free and deliberate action, or is action at the best of times only the beating at the bars of an all-encircling cage?

Again these questions are not new. At every period of history when the barriers hemming man in—whether physical, or social, or religious—have become rigid and apparently unbreakable, he has found himself confronted by the basic question of freedom. But we are living in a day when the barriers have attained a menacing strength never equalled before. The very pressure of world-population, the apparent inexorability of economic laws, the terrible might of a State wielding modern weapons of oppression and destruction, the prospect of increasing automation and mechanical direction: is it surprising that man cries out, breaks out, leaps out? His distinctive existence as man is at stake. Is it still possible to find himself creatively in and through some action within which he is prepared to risk his whole existence?

Every religion has its heretics and schismatics, and these have usually been those who have ventured all in pursuit of a new freedom. Secular society too has its non-conformists and rebels who in open or symbolic action challenge the accepted conventions of their time. Are all such leaps into the unknown divinely inspired? How may we judge the religions and social significance of Ikhnaton's action in ancient Egypt? Or of Gotama's action in ancient India? Or of Luther's action in medieval Europe? All could be called existentialists in their own way. How then is the existentialist theology of the Christian tradition related to other forms of existentialism, secular or religious?

Probably at all times, but certainly in recent times, the touchstone of comparison in this particular area has been the symbol of the Cross. The Cross portrays a representative man confronting the pitch darkness of world rejection and physical death, tasting the bitterness of alienation, about to be extinguished by the mass, swallowed up in the ongoing movement of universal time. Yet he is still the man of faith who leaps into the arms of God as the darkness encircles his physical frame. This is *the* existential action, the Christian theologian claims, which distinguishes Christianity from all other religions. Through this action forgiveness, new life, reconciliation, meaning have come to the world. Death is swallowed up in victory.

It is indeed true, as Dr. Arnold Toynbee has pointed out in his recent Hewett Lectures, that the figure who sacrifices himself for the sake of others can be paralleled in other religions of the world. It can be found

in Judaism, notably in the Suffering Servant of Isaiah. It can be seen in Mahayanian Buddhism in the figure of Bodhisattva, who turns back from the bliss of heaven in order to remain in the world of suffering and show his fellows the true path of life. Yet these are not adequate parallels for two reasons. In the first place the spirit of sacrifice is acclaimed but the sacrifice is dominantly of a passive kind—a meek submission to suffering and a renunciation of human desires. In the second place the portrayal is an idealization: there is no firm basis of historical occurrence, though behind the Servant figure of Isaiah there may well be a background of historical events. But in the records of Jesus the Christ there is a constant witness both to his own adventure in faith—who for the joy that was set before him endured the Cross, despising the shame—and to the actual occurrence within the framework of historical event of the death and resurrection of the Redeemer. It was a real encounter with sin and death, with all, in other words, that is opposed to Divine value and Divine existence. And through this encounter into which his whole human existence was gathered he glorified God and pioneered the way of faith for all who will follow in his steps.

For this is the other side of the witness of existential theology within the Christian framework. It is, as Bultmann has shown so convincingly, that man is not called upon to leap out into darkness and nothingness as secular existentialisms would seem to imply. Rather in the light of the death and resurrection of the Christ man can confront every threat to his own existence and value with courage and with faith, identifying himself wholly with the Representative Man in death in the confident assurance that he who becomes partaker with him in his death will be partaker also of his resurrection. Thus the existentialism of Christian theology cannot be regarded simply as a fulfilment or an example or even as a refinement of other existentialisms. It has no place for an adventure into blank nihilism or ultimate despair. It is true that it leaves behind all earthly securities, but its leap into the unknown is motivated and energized by the vision of him who died for all that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and rose again.

To sum up. I have distinguished four definitive types of Christian theology which are rarely if ever to be found isolated from one another. There is constant overlapping and interaction between them, and yet according to the emphasis given to any one of these types or elements, so is likely to be the attitude taken to the great religions of the world. If the emphasis is upon the cosmic and the psychological, the dominant attitude is likely to be one of sympathetic study with a view to tracing the lines of growth and development which have found their fulfilment in the Christian revelation. Such an attitude is admirably set forth in the Gifford

Lectures of Dr. Farmer, and I cannot do better than quote a paragraph from his book to illustrate what I mean:

> What then is the difference between other forms of living religion and normative Christianity? The difference, it will be suggested, is that they are imperfect and distorted manifestations of the full and unitary relation to God as personal which is alone realized, or at least realizable, in the Christian revelation and experience, the imperfection and distortion consisting in the fact that in them the balanced unity of the elements is not achieved. One or other of the elements as it were breaks loose and obtains a position of obsessive dominance; the result of this is that not only are the remaining elements in varying degree distorted and weakened—indeed at times almost completely suppressed—but also the dominant element itself, lacking the check and completion of the others, becomes increasingly subject to perversion and error. The process may be compared to what sometimes takes place in the body when one group of cells, growing unduly, establishes itself tyrannically over other cells, whilst at the same time needing them in order to live at all; by so doing it may in the end cause the breakdown of the whole organism. It is obvious that this line of thought does give us a basis for a classification of religious types, or a scale of religious forms. We shall maintain that the various types of living religion differ from one another, and can be distinguished and classified, according to *which* of the various elements assumes a position of dominance, and the manner and degree in which it does so.

On the other hand, if the emphasis is upon the historical and the existential, the dominant attitude is likely to be one of critical appraisal and analysis with a view to discovering the ways in which these other interpretations of action and destiny must be given a new centre of reference, and that the Christian one, if they are to become witnesses to salvation rather than to destruction, to hope rather than to despair, to the spirit rather than to the flesh, to reconciliation rather than to hostility, to expansion into life rather than contraction into death. Such a process of judgment is never easy. To reject sincerely-held convictions of other systems is never pleasant, Yet the only alternative is a pale comprehensiveness which says that there are no ultimate distinctions that matter, no criteria between good and evil, between God and the Devil. Christian Theology cannot accept any such easy relativism. With deep respect to those systems which owe their origin to historical event or existential action, the Christian is bound finally to take his place with the writer of the Fourth Gospel who saw the Cross both as the critical judgment of this world and as the casting out of every false system. But out of the conflict and judgment there arises the final confidence of faith:

> I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will
> draw all men unto myself.

A CRITIQUE OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

By the Rev. D. Howard Smith, M.A.

Any criticism of the missionary witness of the Church amongst non-Christian peoples would be unfair and untrue unless due recognition were given to the amazing achievements which have been accomplished through the Christ-like faith, love, devotion and self-sacrifice of the countless men and women who heard and obeyed Christ's call to serve him as missionaries. The history of almost every missionary society is a thrilling and humbling story of how the Spirit of Christ, working through dedicated personalities and groups, has wrestled with the darkest forces of evil, and triumphed by spiritual and moral power over lust, fear, cruelty and degradation. One needs, I think, to have been a missionary living and working in a pagan environment to realize fully the liberating and saving power of Christ in and among men and women who have lived all their lives in a non-Christian environment.

The grave problems which confront the Christian missionary enterprise in the world to-day are due as much to the Church's successes as to its failures. It is Christian missions, perhaps more than anything else, which have stirred Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam to a new vitality, a concern for the masses of their own adherents, and a disconcerting aggressiveness. It is Christian missionary scholarship which has done much to awaken Asia to its own religious heritage and cultures. It is Christian education which, in the first instance, trained native scholars capable of scientific and historical appraisement of their own ancient cultures. Christian ideals and Christian moral standards have penetrated deeply into non-Christian societies, so that even the materialistic and secular government of China, ruling over one-fifth of the human race, owes far more than it will ever admit to the teaching of the Christian missionaries whom it has driven out.

In no sense would we seek to minimize either the past achievement or the present impact of Christian Missions. Nor would we suggest that the day of the Church's mission to the non-Christian world is over. Whether or not we attribute the commission, 'Go ye into all the world . . .' in Matt. xxviii, 19, to Jesus himself, it has been generally recognized from the beginning that the undertaking of such a task is implicit in the nature of the Gospel itself. Yet we have to recognize with the missionary leaders who met at Tambaram, Madras, in 1938 that the non-Christian world is far larger in extent to-day than it ever has been throughout nineteen centuries of Christian history. As they pertinently recognized:

(1) The Church is faced with a situation in its missionary task where areas are closing to the Gospel, and where many of the peoples have become less open-minded to Christian influences.

(2) There is more organized opposition to the Christian Church than in any time within the past hundred years.

(3) The world is in a ferment; nations are seeking substitutes for God and nationalism is replacing old loyalties.

(4) There are more non-Christians in the world now than there were ten years ago.[1]

It is interesting to compare the different emphases in the great world missionary conferences since Edinburgh, 1910, and to note how the co-operating members have passed from a mood of assured confidence to one of uncertainty and perplexity. At the Edinburgh Conference, the first business was the report of the commission on carrying the Gospel to the world, and consisted of a survey of the fields yet to be occupied. The atmosphere of the Conference was optimistic, and slogans such as 'The World for Christ in one generation' were in the air.

The first world war was well over when the world missionary conference met at Jerusalem in 1928. The crucial question debated at this conference was, 'Was there a Christian message for the world, and if so, what was it?' The conference was deeply concerned as to how best to present the message, and recognized the need to understand the non-Christian religions better and to define the Christian attitude towards them.

The conference at Tambaran in 1938 met under the shadow of gathering war-clouds, and a Europe largely under the domination of rival non-Christian ideologies: Naziism, Fascism and Communism. At the same time the Christian missionary movement was feeling the impact of the growing national consciousness of Asian countries, accompanied by a revival of ancient non-Christian faiths. In 'Rethinking Missions' a group of Christian laymen had severely criticized the whole method of missionary approach to non-Christian faiths, and even ventured to question the theological basis of the Christian missionary enterprise. They seemed to many to deny the uniqueness of Christianity. Their extreme liberalism roused H. Kraemer[1b] to proclaim that the Christian faith was the revelation of God, whereas all non-Christian religions were human achievements, however noble they might be. To talk of the Christian faith as comparable, or as fulfilling the non-Christian religions, or of the missionary finding points of contact between the Christian faith and other religions was absurd.

Yet most of the missionaries and Church leaders gathered at Tambaram could not go all the way with Kraemer. They were only too anxious and ready to recognize that there were to be found in the non-Christian religions values of deep religious experiences and great moral achievements, and yet they felt 'bold enough to call men *out* from them

[1] *The World Mission of the Church* (I.M.C., London, 1939), pp. 25-6.

[1b] In his book, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* (London, 1938).

to the fact of Christ'. 'We do so,' they declared, 'because we believe that in him alone is the full salvation which man needs.'[2]

In the tragic years since Tambaram the widest disparity of belief has been revealed as to what should be the aim and purpose of foreign missions, and what should be the methods used to accomplish that purpose. There are profound disagreements as to our attitude to non-Christian faiths. Must they be viewed inevitably as rival faiths necessarily to be conquered and superseded by the only true and perfect religion? Or are they to be viewed as powerful allies in a spiritual fight against the dark anti-religious forces of communism, secularism and materialistic humanism? There are disagreements as to what is the fundamental message of Christianity, and as to the means by which the message is best communicated. More and more the problems connected with communicating the Christian faith have brought missionaries face to face with the question as to what that faith really is.

The Willingen Report of 1952 states that the Christian missionary movement is presented with 'a challenge more searching than any it has faced since the rise of Islam',[3] and in the light of that challenge Christians 'are forced to fundamentals: What is the Gospel? What is the Faith? What is the Church?'

It is not possible for me, in this paper, to deal with the problems concerning the nature of the message and of the faith which the foreign missionary enterprise carries out into the world. These fascinating questions raised by Hocking, Kraemer, Dewick and others need a paper, indeed a series of papers, to themselves. It will be convenient to make my criticisms under two main heads: the *task*, and the *methods*. Under the latter head I propose also to deal briefly with the relation of Christianity to non-Christian faiths.

(1) *The Task*

Unfortunately missionaries are hopelessly divided as to what the task really is. On the one hand there are those who believe that Christianity *is* the faith for the whole world, that it is a Gospel for all men of whatever condition. They live, work and pray for the conversion of the Hindu, the Buddhist and the Muslim to faith in Jesus Christ and look forward in hope to the time when a redeemed humanity shall be brought to acknowledge the Lordship of Christ over the whole of life. On the other hand, there are a very large number who believe that though the Gospel must be preached to every creature, God's purpose is to make up the number of his elect. The majority of mankind, in unbelief and rejection of Christ, are doomed to meet the condemnation which such rejection entails. The

[2] *Ibid*, p. 24.

[3] *The Missionary Obligation of the Church* (Willingen, 1952; I.M.C., London), p. 1 and p. 26.

missionary task is faithfully to witness to the saving truths of the Christian religion in a dark and apostate world until such time as the Lord shall come again to consummate his kingdom. Then there are those missionaries, perhaps an increasing number, who believe that, with deeper insights into non-Christian religions and indeed into Christian truth itself, we shall move forward towards a reinterpretation of Christianity in which spiritual truths and insights will be incorporated which up to the present have either been neglected or left incipient, truths and thoughts which in some cases have been grasped more clearly by peoples of other faiths.

The great international missionary conferences of modern times have stressed the importance and obligation of the missionary task of the Church, and have urged that closer co-operation between churches and missionary agencies is essential if any new advance is to be made. Yet, fundamental to the problem is the fact that different churches have quite different concepts of what the Church is, and among those seeking co-operation are many whose theological position, if logically pressed, would deny that other missionary agents really belong to, or are part of, the True Church.

The Roman Catholic Church, which still claims to hold the adherence of the majority of Christians, reveals itself as a great monolithic world-encompassing structure, the visible Body of Christ on earth. They, and only they, who accept the ministrations of its sacraments and believe in its dogmas are truly Christian in the full sense of the word, and recipients of Christ's full salvation. However kindly and understanding the Roman Catholic missionary may be to peoples of other faiths (and there are notable examples), the attitude of Roman Catholics to all other religions is of necessity uncompromising and intolerant. One can hardly conceive of such a religion becoming the Faith for the world.

As to the non-Roman communions, however far they may have diverged from Rome, almost all of them accept unquestioningly, as basic and fundamental, beliefs and practices which have become sacrosanct through long tradition. Many of these beliefs and practices cannot be proved to belong to the earliest gospel tradition but rather grew out of the need to interpret the Christian message within the framework of a Graeco-Roman, and later on an European, culture. It is hard, almost impossible, for the average Christian missionary to understand why some of the beliefs and practices in which he himself has been nurtured from childhood can have little meaning or relevance for men and women whose cultures and thought-forms are so very different from his own. With remarkably few exceptions, Christian missions have been characterized by an inflexibility, not only as regards dogma, but in respect of such matters as church government, orders of ministry, forms of worship, etc., and, as the numerous sects and denominations of Protestant Christianity have felt the urge to send out their representatives on to the Mission Field, rigidities

in faith and practice which they have inculcated are now proving to be an embarrassment to oecumenical Christianity and to any move towards Reunion. But whereas in 1911 the greater proportion by far of the missionary personnel from America came from larger denominations willing to co-operate, by 1956 only 42.5 per cent of the total Protestant foreign missionary body from N. America co-operated in the Division of Foreign Missions of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Non-co-operative 'faith' missions, and evangelicals, rigidly fundamentalist, holding the view that there is a literal hell to which men without Christ are doomed, have nearly 10,000 missionaries. Pentacostal adherents alone are estimated at over eight millions.[4] What is true of N. America is more or less true in this country and elsewhere.

In addition to all this, the rise in Africa and Asia of powerful indigenous sects, almost invariably fundamentalist, millenarianist and condemnatory of other Christian bodies, witnesses to the divisions of Christianity. 'A house divided against itself cannot stand.' A divided Christianity can hardly hope to offer an adequate Faith for the world.

It is sadly true that the several divisions of Christianity have felt it their task, sometimes one might think their primary task, to bring their creeds, liturgies, prayers, hymns, methods of church government, church architecture, music, art, etc., familiar to the missionary, not as gifts to be set aside if something better evolved to take their place, but as something rigidly to be adhered to, something obligatory and fundamental to the faith. I well remember the horror I felt when someone, pointing to a Chinese ordained minister, said to me, 'He is a more dyed-in-the-wool Wesleyan than the missionaries themselves.' W. G. B. Beam and others have argued cogently that the adoption of the Western system of a full-time, well-trained, paid ministry in most of the mission field is totally unrealistic and not possible for the Church as a whole. Mr. Beam brings adequate proof to show that in the Early Church many of the ordained clergy and even bishops supported themselves by gainful employment.[5]

A quotation taken from an address prepared by Canon Gairdner of Cairo for the Jerusalem Conference is appropriate here. 'Our religion, as preached to the Mohammedan, must be a religion of the Spirit—of the "Spirit of Jesus".' The phrase is pregnant to the last degree: not the matter of Jesus, not a 'spirit of service similar to his'—but 'The Spirit' of God which was in him, and which through him is the divine means of grace to-day. We have nothing else to give the Muslim unless we give him this. Most futile, most disappointing and most foolish of all quests would be that which were only to seek to substitute for one ritual another,

[4] H. Lindsell, Art: *The Appraisal of Agencies not co-operating with the International Missionary Council Groupings* (I.R.M., London, April, 1958), pp. 202-9.

[5] W. G. B. Beam, Art: *The Support of the Clergy in the First Five Centuries A.D.* (I.R.M., London, October, 1956), pp. 420-428.

for one system another system, for observance of one series of ordinances another series. And again, 'The brotherhood of Islam, however imperfect, means much to those within. Since this is so, it is obvious that unless we can receive them with a brotherhood that is higher, better, more spiritual, warmer, in a word, *truer*, they will marvel how we have the face to preach to them at all.'[6]

In our conception of the missionary task, we must think again into the meaning of incarnational religion. Christ incarnates himself in his Church, his body in the world; but it must always be recognized that that body is but a poor, weak and imperfect medium for the expression of his eternal Spirit. It must ever be dying afresh, being crucified afresh, that he himself may come again to meet the challenge of a new age and new opportunities.

If the missionary task of Christianity is conceived of not only as preaching the Gospel but as planting and extending the Church, and I cannot conceive of its being otherwise, the inflexibilities of almost all branches of the Church in regard to their doctrines of the Church and of its ministries will need to be discarded. Forms of church organization and government familiar to us may need to be radically modified to meet the needs of Christians with a cultural background different from our own. Even the Faith itself may need to be re-stated in thought-forms widely different from those of the Graeco-Roman world in which the historic creeds of the Church were first formulated.

(2) *The Methods*

Turning to the *methods* of missionary service, it is a natural human failing that we cling so tenaciously to old and tried methods which have proved successful in the past, and are timorous of venturing into untried ways. But the situation in the world to-day is radically different from what it was even a generation ago. It is high time that those who direct and guide the missionary policies of the Church to-day realized that the methods and attitudes of our predecessors are now totally inadequate. As D. McGavran writes: 'We stand at the beginning of a new era. Our problem is not how to carry out better the missions on which we have been engaged, but how to conduct the new kind required.'[7]

It is a sign of hope that there are a few within our missionary societies who are alive to the need for new approaches and for a new missionary strategy. Unfortunately they have not been allowed to carry their churches very far along with them. Even yet the bulk of our church members, even those interested, base their understanding of Foreign Missions on the stirring biographies of missionary pioneers and heroes of the last century.

[6] *The Christian Message*: Jerusalem Report, 1928 (I.M.C., London), pp. 281-2.

[7] D. McGavran, Art: *New Methods for a New Age in Missions* (I.R.M., October, 1955), pp. 394-403.

There are a few lines along which I respectfully suggest that much fruitful work might be done.

(1) As to the training and preparation of missionaries. I am appalled, as I look back to my own early beginnings as a missionary, to think how inadequately I had been prepared to represent Christ and preach his Gospel to the Chinese. To take just one point in illustration. K. Reischauer writes: 'That a knowledge of non-Christian religions is important for all Christian workers who would win men of other faiths for Christ should go without saying. In fact, however, few Christian missionaries have any understanding of the spiritual and cultural heritage of the non-Christian world. Mission Boards, in selecting their candidates for foreign service, insist on no such requirements.' 'A knowledge of the spiritual heritage of the hearers comes, indeed, only second in importance to an understanding of the Christian message itself.'[8] The same point is brought out by U Kyaw Than, a prominent Christian leader of Burma who was formerly an Assoc. General Secretary of the World's Student Christian Federation, in regard to 'the institutes for the study of the living faiths of man in Asia. In one Asian country I know the whole purpose of the work seemed to mean just teaching the foreign missionaries in a foreign language the elementary content of the religion concerned'.[9]

(2) As to the type of missionary. The Church must not think that by sending out young and comparatively untried men and women it is fulfilling its missionary obligation. If Christianity is to make any serious impact on Buddhism and Hinduism, it must offer to the leaders of those faiths the intimate intercourse and friendship of its theologians and saints. Nothing but the best, intellectually and spiritually, is worthy to meet on common ground the best in Asian religions. As U Kyaw Than remarks: 'The missionary from non-Asian lands often moves among certain groups, such as the ignorant and the handicapped. . . . It is, I suppose, true that often there is no real encounter between persons. There is no meeting of mind with mind. . . . The sustained encounter between Christian and Buddhist is seldom developed. The Gospel is either irrelevant or a folly to the Buddhist, not because the Buddhist has understood the Biblical meaning of the "scandal" of the Cross, but because the proclamation of the Gospel has, for him, not really happened.'[10] The fundamental task of the Christian Mission in Asia is a theological one.

(3) I pass over all the vexed problems of the relation of the missionary and the mission boards to the so-called Younger churches; the frustrations

[8] A. K. Reischaur, Art: *Non-Christian Religions and Christian Leadership* (I.R.M., April, 1954), pp. 179-185.

[9] U Kyaw Than, Art: *The Christian Mission in Asia To-day* (I.R.M., April, 1958), p. 157.

[10] *Ibid*, p. 156.

caused by the missionary's divided loyalties; the fact that missionaries are all too often guests or consultants rather than committed members sharing the same discipline; the disastrous mistakes made by missionaries and mission boards because they failed to understand the different idiom and thought-forms of those to whom they wished to communicate the Gospel: and come to what I believe to be of crucial importance in our time, the place and function of laymen in secular service abroad in commending the Gospel.

What has the Church done, what is the Church doing, to equip the tens of thousands of laymen who go for service abroad so that they may be able to give some account of the faith that is in them? We know of the scheme, under the Swiss missionary council, for the training of laymen for Christian service abroad in non-missionary posts. There are 65,000 Swiss abroad in secular occupations as against 300 missionaries. Surely more and more of the resources of the Church should be used on this important work. Every help and encouragement should be offered to those Christians who meet in daily discussion and co-operation leaders from non-Christian lands in various world organizations. 'It often seems that, for the Buddhist,' writes U Kyaw Than, 'Christianity implies the social and cultural categories of the West, and not always at their fundamental best.'[11] Another Burmese, Dr. U Hla Bu, Professor of Philosophy and Psychology in the University of Rangoon and Chairman of the Burma Christian Council, writes: 'It would seem that cultural infiltration is more effective than direct missionary effort in winning adherents to a religion.'[12] Göte Hendinquist, writing of the Jews, notes that 'in Europe during the last century more than 100,000 Jews became Christian because of inter-marriage and other cultural and social motives, whilst in the same period less than 5,000 Jews are said to have been converted to the Christian faith by missionary effort'.[13] The failure of the Church to substantiate the claim that Christianity is the faith for the world is due, more than anything else, to the fact that the multitudes of Asia and Africa have failed to see in the lives of those who have come to them from the Christian West any compelling reason why they should forsake their own spiritual and moral values for those of Christianity.

Finally, I come to the relation of Christianity to non-Christian faiths. This is a vast question with which it is impossible to deal adequately here. There are, however, a few observations it is necessary to make.

It is often assumed that the Christian attitude has changed in modern times. According to this view the earliest attitude was that represented by

[11] *Ibid*, p. 157.

[12] U Hla Bu, Art: *The Christian Encounter with Buddhism in Burma* (I.R.M., April, 1958), p. 172.

[13] Göte Hedenquist, Art: *The Dialogue between Christians and Jews* (I.R.M., April, 1958), p. 178.

William Rubruck when he said to Batu Khan: 'Be it known to you, of a certainty, that you shall not obtain the joys of heaven unless you become a Christian, for God saith, "Whosoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned";' or by Henry Martyn in 1806 after a visit to a temple in Serampore, 'I shivered at being in the neighbourhood of hell, my heart was ready to burst at the dreadful state to which the devil had brought my fellow-creatures'; or by the missionaries pilloried by Lord Minto who threatened 'with hell fire and with still hotter fire . . . a whole race of men for believing in the religion which they were taught by their fathers and mothers, and the truth of which it is simply impossible it should ever have entered into their heads to doubt'.[14] This attitude gave place towards the end of the nineteenth century to that represented by Farquhar in his 'Crown of Hinduism'. Good is to be found in all religions, but Christianity is the crown and perfection of them all. Then followed Liberal Christianity, resulting in a willingness to believe that all great religions have something to offer towards a coming world-religion, that God's revelation is not confined to Christianity, and that some spiritual insights and truths have been revealed in other religions even more perfectly than in Christianity. Religions, they teach, must fraternize and close their ranks against the common enemies of materialism, secularism and humanism. Finally, there is the attitude represented by Kraemer that all religions, including empirical Christianity, in so far as they are the results of man's spiritual strivings, are under judgment, and that the bar of judgment is the categorical Biblical Word of God revealed in Christ.

The truth, however, is that whenever Christianity has come into close contact with other faiths from the time of the Early Christian Fathers down to the present, besides those who have been uncompromisingly hostile and condemnatory there have been others eager to attribute to the working of God's Spirit all that was best and noblest in non-Christian cults and philosophies. The idea of the 'logos spermatikos' was a fruitful concept in early days to justify the acceptance of noble pagans into the Kingdom of God.

The author of *Acts* puts into the mouth of Peter, confronted by a noble representative of Roman culture, the words 'of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but, in every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to him'.[15] In his apology Justin Martyr writes: 'They who have lived with the Logos are Christians, even if they are called theists like Socrates, Heraclitus and others with them—we have shown that Christ is the Logos of whom the whole race are partakers, and those who lived according to the Logos are Christians, even

[14] Sardar K. M. Panikkar: *Asia and Western Dominance* (London, 1953), pp. 419-20.

[15] *Acts* x, 34-5.

though accounted atheists.'[16] Clement of Alexander and Origen followed the same tradition. It was said of Thomas Aquinas that he baptized Aristotle into the Christian faith. The Early Jesuit fathers in China went farther than the majority of the Church thought wise in their appreciation of, and accommodation to Christianity to, a non-Christian way of life. What one might call the 'hell-fire' attitude to non-Christians is as rampant in many present-day missionary sects, as it was in the early days of the Protestant missionary enterprise.

A deeper understanding of non-Christian faiths is imperative. Towards this the Church should not shrink from her responsibility in encouraging the most penetrating and scholarly study of other faiths. Some of the interpretations of Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam still current are a travesty of those faiths and misunderstand and falsify some of their profoundest teachings.

Over a quarter of a century ago the 'Rethinking Missions' commission urged the setting up and maintaining of institutions for the study and interpretation of Christian civilization, philosophy, theology and comparative religion. Such institutions are costly, especially if they are to attract the foremost Christian scholars to serve in them.

Far more could, I believe, be attempted along the lines followed by the late Karl Reichelt in his approach to Buddhist monks. U Hla Bu has an interesting story of the challenge made by a national Buddhist leader to a well-known Christian scholar to try out 'vipassana'. 'Respected teacher,' he said, 'you are well versed in our Sacred Scriptures. You lack only one thing, you have not tried it out yourself, and so have not really gained true enlightenment. Why not undertake a course of vipassana practice (i.e. a form of meditation with the help of an experienced guide, leading to deliverance, control over self and perfect peace) and seek to validate the truth by experiment?'[17]

We cannot shut our eyes to great non-Christian religions professed by millions of people, religions with a long history and a distinguished heritage. The Christian has to face up to the questions as to whence they came, what they mean, and what is their relation to his own faith. He must admit that these faiths contain sublime moral and religious insights, and cannot be dismissed as mere aberrations. In lands where holiness has always had a great appeal, the Christian missionary has often shown up badly and the Christian(!) layman often worse. In lands where mysticism and the attainment of enlightenment have led men to perform incredible feats the Christian missionary has often appeared as a mere tyro in the spiritual life.

Finally, the Christian Church, in its missionary service has a God-given opportunity right on its own doorstep of caring for the thousands of people

[16] Justin: *Apology* I, vil, 2-4; see also II, xiii.

[17] U Hla Bu, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

from other lands who have come to this country since the war. Many of these people go back to become leaders in their own countries, and the impression they gain while in this country will remain with them through life. On the whole, the Christian Churches have remained strangely indifferent to the spiritual needs of these 'strangers within our gates', and this missionary work is only in its beginnings and is done by all too few people. It needs to be done lovingly, patiently, even sacrificially, and with a deep measure of understanding.

THE CHALLENGE OF BUDDHISM

By the Rev. George Appleton, M.A.

In his book, *The Christian Message in a non-Christian World*, written for the 1938 Tambaram Conference of the International Missionary Council, Dr. Kraemer said: 'The real meeting between Christianity and the Eastern systems of life has not yet taken place, and is still a matter for the future. All the work that has been done is preliminary, and nobody can tell how long this stage will last.' Twenty momentous years of history have altered the whole situation, and in his second great book, *Religion and the Christian Faith*, published in 1956, Dr. Kraemer claims that the real confrontation is about to take place.

Religions are being forced into encounter in a way that has not been possible before. There is first of all the rapid development of communications in which people can move about the world much more quickly, and in which through newspapers, books and radio, news and views travel from one part of the world to another almost as soon as they happen or are expressed. Adherents of other faiths come to the West to study or lecture in our Universities, represent their own countries in embassies and commercial firms, while television brings the sight of people of other faiths, their holy places and their ways of worship into our own homes.

The ancient religions have been stirred to new activity by the spirit of nationalism which is sweeping Asia and Africa to-day, and which makes people in every nation focus attention on their own history, culture, literature and the traditional religion which has guided them spiritually in the past. Statesmen in charge of each newly independent nation are turning to the ancient religion for a spiritual force which will unify the nation and supply the necessary inspiration for it in a period of new responsibility.

The impact of recent happenings and modern ideas is another powerful factor in the new stirring of religious life. A doctrine of world negation or a view of history as illusion can be of no inspiration to statesmen responsible for the future of their country. A patriot like U Nu, the

Prime Minister of Burma, whose temperament draws him to the meditation of the monastery, chooses to serve his country in the strain and frustration of political life. Leaders of religious faith are being impelled to think out the relevance of their faith to modern conditions, and to prove that their own religion is the one best equipped to get the world out of the mess into which it has fallen.

In one way the new vitality in the other religions is a tribute to the effectiveness of the Christian mission, particularly now that there are indigenous churches planted in every land, with indigenous leaders, who can speak to their own people from within their own national situation, no longer just as the disciples of Western missionaries, but as men with their own experience of Christ, whose voices are heard with acceptance throughout the world-wide Church.

So the ancient religions are resurgent. And among them Buddhism stands out for its vigour and confidence, and for its renewed determination to world mission.

Two years ago a missionary friend of mine in Ceylon was preparing to come on furlough when he was visited by a Buddhist monk, who asked if he might borrow some short, simple books on the Christian faith. Together the missionary and the monk looked round my friend's library and selected certain books. As they parted my friend said:

'I wonder if you would think me rude if I asked your purpose in borrowing these books.'

'Well, you see,' replied the monk, 'my job is to train Buddhist missionaries to go to darkest Europe, and I think it is only right that they should know something about the religion of the natives before they go.'

The recent celebrations of the 2,500th anniversary of the final entry of the Buddha into Nirvana focused attention on that great spiritual figure as never before. In India the celebrations were possibly on a grander scale than in any other country. And the Buddha was hailed as the greatest of India's sons. The conversion, shortly before his death, of Dr. Ambedkar, the leader of the scheduled classes, with thousands of his followers, is evidence of the Buddhist revival in the land of its birth. In Rangoon the Sixth General Council was called by Theravada Buddhists to coincide with the anniversary, though so far no striking evidence of spiritual revival has been forthcoming from that two-year conference. At the anniversary celebrations in Colombo there was a striking visual representation of the Buddha with rays of light emanating from him and falling on to a sphere of the world. Underneath was the caption, 'Buddha, the Light of the World'. Both in Burma and Ceylon missionary training colleges have been established to train missionaries for the West, and numbers of them are already at work in Germany, Britain and the United States.

Since the war, Buddhists in Asia have been insistently stressing the

need of world peace, based on their understanding of the unity and sacredness of all life. Buddhist monks and Burmese politicians have been urging Buddhists to support a world mission of Buddhism—'to save the world from Christianity which has failed to prevent the so-called Christian nations of the West from involving mankind in two world wars, with the threat of a third and even more disastrous one'.

Religious uncertainty in the West is another factor in the successful spread of Buddhism. Some of our most incisive Christian thinkers have suggested that the West is living in a 'post-Christian' era, in which many people have become disillusioned and are questioning the Christian assumptions of the past. As a result, many people in Europe are looking to Buddhism, not only because of its true merits, but because of its appeal to the modern sceptical, self-sufficient mind, which nevertheless wants something of a religious faith by which to live. English Buddhists with whom I have spoken have said that they failed to find in the religion of their local churches anything convincing and satisfying, so they turned to Buddhism and were gratefully surprised to find something there. On the other hand, some of them have said that since becoming Buddhists they have begun to understand some of the teaching of the New Testament as never before. So perhaps the end of the story is not yet.

This resurgence of Buddhism brings challenges to the Christian Church, most of which lie deeper than the organizational level.

The Challenge to Understand

There is first of all the challenge to understand what Buddhism is saying. This is not easy, for we in the West like to define and analyze, to argue in logical reasoning, to express our religious faith in clear positive terms. Eastern thought cannot be put into this straight-jacket: it prefers to say 'not this . . . nor that', and refuses to say exactly what; it rejoices in paradox, a Yes is often uncomfortably joined with a No. Often when talking with Buddhists I have been reproved with the words, 'You are not thinking in the way in which Buddhists think.' In the past we of the West have learnt what we know about Buddhism from Western scholars and missionaries; now Buddhists are interpreting their own religious heritage and experience, aided by Western Buddhists. In the last resort it is only people from within a religion who can finally tell you about its mind and heart. So there is a good deal of humble and patient listening needed before we shall understand.

Buddhism, too, has expressed itself in varying ways as it has gone out on its missionary journeys. The Theravada Buddhism of Burma, Ceylon and Siam, which claims to be the primitive form, with its cold, metaphysical outlook, with its agnostic or atheistic faith, with its emphasis on the non-personal nature of man, with its high code of ethics and its insistence on man's ability to work out his own salvation, is very different

from the Mahayana Buddhism of China and Japan, with its principle of Buddhahood, its belief in Bodhisattvas (men who have attained Nirvana but have stayed on in the world for the sake of their fellow-men, with whom they share their merit), with its ideas of salvation and grace coming close to those ideas in Christianity, with its intense interest in the welfare of the dead. Buddhism in Tibet is different again, mixed with nature worship and occult practices, with mechanized methods of prayer through fluttering flags and revolving prayer wheels, and as in China a great interest in the dead.

In many ways Mahayana Buddhism is a criticism of the cold Theravada system, and a study of the changes in Buddhism as it spread northwards may teach us much about the human heart and its deep, unsatisfied longings.

The Challenge to Account for the Buddha

In addition to this need for a sympathetic understanding of Buddhism, to be learned not only from the study of the Scriptures but also from friendly liaison with Buddhists, there is the need for Christians to account for the Buddha. For 2,500 years he has been reverenced as the Light of Asia, and to-day more than one-third of the human race knows something of his inspiration.

The Buddha was a figure of great compassion, with a love that comes very close to the conception of love in the New Testament, a keen insight into human nature and the transitoriness of the world, combined with a demand for discipline and effort in practical living. There was little in his teaching about God, and he claimed that his enlightenment came from a retirement deep within himself. How far may we believe that the God of the whole earth and the Father of all mankind was at work in him?

Dean Matthews in a recent article has these two paragraphs: 'The question is bound to arise in the mind of the intelligent Christian, where does my faith stand in reference to the other great religions? On the whole, the answer given by the Church in the past has been that Christianity is the true religion and all others are simply false.

'The enlarged knowledge which we now have of the history of religion and of the sacred books of other faiths render this answer unacceptable, and I suppose most of us would be prepared to admit that the quests for God that have produced the higher religions have not been wholly in vain and that the Holy Spirit has been at work in other spheres as well as the Hebrew people and the Christian Church.'

(The *Daily Telegraph*, 16/8/1958: 'The Summing Up')

The Dean goes on to suggest that St. Paul's teaching in his letter to the Ephesians of God's purpose to sum up all things in Christ, provides

a new approach to the other religions, looking forward to a time when all spiritual movements will be reconciled and fulfilled in Christ.

In the prologue to the Fourth Gospel the writer speaks of the Eternal Christ as 'the light which lighteth every man', and Archbiship Temple in his *Readings in St. John's Gospel* comments: 'From the beginning the divine light has shone. Always it was coming into the world; always it enlightened every man in his reason and conscience. . . . All that is noble in the non-Christian systems of thought, or conduct, or worship is the work of Christ upon them and within them. By the Word of God—that is to say, by Jesus Christ—Isaiah, and Plato, and Zoroaster, and Buddha, and Confucius conceived and uttered such truth as they declared. There is only one divine light; and every man in his measure is enlightened by it.'

Perhaps this challenge to Christian thought has been worded most cogently by Monsignor Guardini in his great book, *The Lord*:

> 'There is only one whom we might be inclined to compare with Jesus: Buddha. This man is a great mystery. He lived in an awful, almost superhuman freedom, yet his kindness was powerful as a cosmic force. Perhaps Buddha will be the last religious genius to be explained by Christianity. As yet no one has really uncovered his Christian significance. Perhaps Christ had not only one precursor, John, last of the prophets, but three: John the Baptist for the Chosen People, Socrates from the heart of antiquity, and Buddha, who spoke the ultimate word in Eastern religious cognition.'

After discussing the possible influence of one man on another, Guardini continues:

> 'Nevertheless, there is a limit to man's possibilities: he can effect only things within the world . . . he cannot change the world as a whole, for he is part of it. . . . He has no influence over being as such, or its characteristics. He can change all manner of things on the surface of the earth; earth itself escapes his power. Only one person ever seriously attempted to go farther: to lay hands on being—Buddha. He attempted the inconceivable: himself part of existence, he tried to lift all existence by its "bootstraps". So far no Christian has succeeded in comprehending and evaluating Buddha's conception of Nirvana, that ultimate awakening, cessation of illusion and being. To do this one must have become entirely free in the love of God's Son, yet remain linked by a profound reverence to the great and mysterious man who lived six centuries before the Lord.'

The survival of Buddhism for 2,500 years and the satisfaction and peace that it has brought to devout monks and laymen in many countries and in succeeding generations calls for explanation. 'Every plant, which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up' (*Matthew* xv, 13), said Jesus; presumably the converse is also true.

The Goal of Buddhism

Christian missionaries and Western scholars have often interpreted Nirvana as extinction or nothingness. Buddhists to-day are claiming that the gospel of Buddhism lies in its teaching about Nirvana.

The Buddha was reticent about Nirvana, as he was about the existence of a Supreme Being. Perhaps he thought it more important to fix men's attention on the means of attaining Nirvana than to talk too much about it.

In one of the sermons attributed to the Buddha, the *Udana Sutta*, there is a passage which speaks of a sphere outside and above human existence, into which men may escape. 'There is, monks, an unborn, not become, not made, uncompounded, and were it not, monks, for this unborn, not become, not made, uncompounded, no escape could be shown here for what is born, has become, is made, is compounded. But because there is, monks, an unborn, not become, not made, uncompounded, therefore an escape can be shown for what is born, has become, is made, is compounded.'

This seems to me one of the most important texts for the Christian student of Buddhism to study. Buddhist scholars connect it with the concept of Nirvana, but to me it seems to open a door into the spiritual world, hinting as possibilities of discussion about the existence of God.

In the Scriptures Nirvana is described as the stopping of becoming: when a man attains Nirvana he has ceased to change and grow because he has reached the goal. Becoming is swallowed up in the perfection of being.

Nirvana is also described as the getting rid of craving—all desire, greed, lust, attachment are gone; the man is emancipated from the three cardinal evils of lust, ill-will, and unreasoning stupidity, he has broken all the fetters that bind him, he has come to the end of the weary recurring cycles of existence. He has reached the end of being born, of age-ing and dying. The poems of the earliest monks and nuns speak of the deep joy and thrilling hope with which they looked upon Nirvana:

> 'The escape therefrom, 'tis real, beyond the sphere
> Of reason, lasting, unborn, unproduced,
> The sorrowless, the stainless path that ends
> The things of woe, the peace from worries—bliss!'

Nirvana would thus seem to be the escape into the eternal, the unchangeable, the truly real, the holy. We Christians can recognize and admire this Buddhist longing for the permanent, the perfect, the eternal, the peace that cannot be found in the conditions of this life but must be sought elsewhere. We Christians, too, are seeking this peace which passes understanding, but we believe that it can only be found in God. A Sinhalese writer, Ananda Coomaraswamy, has compared Nirvana to eternal life as taught by Jesus—a quality of life possible now but to be enjoyed in all its fulness hereafter. The Christian would add: 'And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent' (*John* xvii, 3).

Let a modern Buddhist scholar, Edward Conze, sum up for us the Buddhist belief in Nirvana: 'We are told that Nirvana is permanent, stable, imperishable, immovable, ageless, deathless, unborn, and unbecome, that it is power, bliss and happiness, the secure refuge, the shelter, and the place of unassailable safety; that it is the real Truth and the Supreme Reality; that it is the *Good*, the supreme goal and the one and only consummation of our life, the eternal, hidden and incomprehensible Peace.'

There is clearly a longing in the heart of the Buddhist for the real, the eternal, the perfect. Bishop Westcott recognized this in his book, *The Gospel of Life*, published in 1892, and commented that in the Buddhist interpretation of the conditions under which men have to live 'all personal happiness, like personal pain, carries with it the sentence of perishing. Lasting peace must be found elsewhere'. The Buddhist can indeed say with *Hebrews* xiii, 14, 'For we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after the city which is to come.' Like Abraham, he looks for the city which has eternal foundations, but he does not yet know that its builder and maker is God.

Witness to the Reality of God

Buddhist tradition does not explicitly deny the existence of a creator; it regards the question as irrelevant and unimportant. In his early search for an escape for men from suffering, the Buddha had gone from one teacher to another and had heard the endless arguments that went on. Perhaps he felt that there was no hope for men in all these metaphysical arguments and futile speculations. Or it may be that he saw no help in the many popular gods of Hinduism with their temples and their priests, their ritual and their sacrifices. It is probably true to say that Theravada Buddhism is atheistic; in Mahayana, as I have already said, there is the conception of Godhead, conceived as impersonal, an ultimate reality akin to the philosophical notion of the Absolute, of which the chief attribute is Namelessness.

Discussion with the Mahayanist is obviously more promising than with the Theravadin: the Christian can at least agree that God must be unknowable unless he chooses to reveal himself, and ask that the revelation which he himself accepts in Jesus Christ shall be examined.

But with the Theravadin who does not believe in God, dialogue is not so easy. One may perhaps urge that if there is an unconditioned sphere into which man can escape, the question is at least an open one. We may perhaps ask the Buddhist who has such a strong sense of right and wrong, where that sense originates. We must at any rate be able to give our own reasons for faith in God.

The question, however, is not likely to be answered by argument, but by much more humble and homely means, the exchange of our experi-

ences as men seeking to find the answer to the questions which thinking men ask everywhere, as fellow-seekers trying to help one another along the road to the better country, the unchanging and eternal.

As we Christians make God the great passion of our lives, as we base our lives on his Will, people may be more willing to consider the Christian answer. 'God is the only reality,' says St. Augustine, 'and we are only real in so far as we are in his order and he in us.' Without the vision of God there is no deep sense of man's sinfulness and need of salvation, without the revelation of God in Christ forgiveness and reconciliation are at the best hopes rather than facts. If the Ultimate Reality is not personal, how can man be personal?

The Church in Buddhist countries has a tremendous task to make God real to people who do not believe there is a God. Their only hope lies in God as a God who reveals himself. From time to time God lays hold of a man as he did Saul of Tarsus. Forty years ago a Buddhist hermit, without any contact with Christian missionaries, came to believe in the Eternal God and went about lower Burma preaching this discovery. One day he went to reprove a disciple of his who had become a Christian, and so he learned for the first time of Jesus Christ as the revelation of the Eternal God. He burned himself out preaching this great discovery in bazaars, on railway trains and steamers, wherever men would listen, and several hundred devout Buddhists followed him to Christ.

The Buddha insisted that he was not God, only a shower-of-the-way: Jesus Christ insisted that He was God, He was the Way. Need the two insistences be incompatible? In every encounter, as Dr. Kraemer stresses, there are three people present, the Christian, the Buddhist and the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is the most important partner of the three; 'and no man can say Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit' (I *Cor.* xii, 3).

Buddhists have a conception of love which comes very close to that of the New Testament, a love exemplified to them by the compassion of the Buddha. A short while ago I listened to a Buddhist monk preaching about love; he described it as universal loving kindness, not a matter of feeling but of being, living, acting, without self-interest, ready for sacrifice, the honest desire for the true welfare of others. In the discussion afterwards, I said how moved I had been to find how close his idea of love was to that of the New Testament, and asked him what he thought was the source and origin of love. He replied that it came from a divine seed in every man, and then, sensing what was in my mind, added, 'I suppose you Christians would say that it came from God.' The way to bring Buddhists into the Kingdom may well be that of love rather than argument. The still more excellent way is always that of I *Cor* xiii. Bishop Westcott in the section of his book dealing with Buddhism says: 'It is worthy of remark that in the original records of Buddhism there is a word (*maitri*) which is commensurate with *charity*. Christian love

(ἀγάπη),' and his final comment is: 'The true vitality of Buddhism, and therefore its interest for us, lies in the moral principles of love and sacrifice which we have considered.'

Possible Common Ground

In his search for a way of escape for men from suffering, the Buddha finally withdrew into himself, and in the depths of his own being discovered what he believed to be the solution. That moment of enlightenment also marked the achievement of Nirvana. In meditation the Theravada Buddhist similarly withdraws from the world of sense and from conscious thought into what he claims to be intuitive touch with ultimate reality. As a preparation he quietens body and mind by a discipline of posture and breathing, and then concentrates his mind on one bare point of attention until that too vanishes. This spiritual concentration demands also a moral preparation, the ridding of the mind of all desire and grasping as well as the disciplined observance of Buddhist moral rules.

Zen Buddhism in Japan also emphasizes this direct experimental touch with reality—the very word Zen is connected with the Sanskrit term 'dhyana', and is often translated 'meditation', though it has a much more dynamic note about it, speaking of the intense effort to achieve 'direct seeing into the heart'. The Zen Buddhist endeavours to reach this direct, intuitive touch with reality by various devices: there is the paradoxical, quick-fire question and answer between meditation master and pupil, called *mondo*, which aims at so speeding the process of thought that it is suddenly transcended; or paradoxical, non-sensical statements, *koans*, which aim at breaking the limitations of the intellect and developing the intuition. Zen aims at developing the mind to the limits of thought and then driving it to the verge of the precipice where thought can go no farther. Zen says, 'Why stop or go round or go back? Why not go over?'

Dr. Suzuki is the great exponent of Zen. To him the important concept is that of *sunya*, the void or emptiness, the sphere of 'unknowing', which to the mystic is not absence or extinction, but true knowing, the attempt to get beyond the relationship of subject and object into union with reality. Dr. Suzuki, in his recent book *Mysticism, Buddhist and Christian*, has compared Meister Eckhart and Traherne with some of the Buddhist mystics. We need Christian students of the interior life to meet this approach, and to introduce Buddhists to other Christian mystics like St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross. Is it not possible that in the Cloud of Unknowing, the darkness which is the ante-chamber of the brightness of God's presence, the hand stretched out by the Christian mystic may grasp that of the Buddhist? We Christians need the masters of the devotional life to guide us in this common ground of meditation. Dr. Suzuki in the book already mentioned, and Dr. Conze in his book, *Buddhist Meditation*, have made the advance towards us from the Buddhist side.

Evelyn Underhill in one of her early books, *Practical Mysticism*, speaks of three spheres of experience—the world of phenomena and outward happenings in which we live, the world of reality behind the ever-changing phenomena, and the inmost sphere of God's presence. Buddhists only acknowledge the first two; they penetrate into the second by the force of effort and discipline. They do not know as yet the inmost sphere, nor see that both of the other spheres are grounded in God as Creator, nor suspect that in Christ God has penetrated into these two spheres or that Christ has made for us a new and living way into the holy place.

'Be still then and know. . . .' If we Christians were to follow the Psalmist's advice more closely in the prayer of silence and the contemplation of God, perhaps the Buddhist would allow us to complete the quotation—'Be still then, and know that I am God.'

In Theravada Buddhism there is no prayer or worship as we know them. But there is something which comes very close to intercession in the practice of what is called the Divine Moods, in which the devout Buddhist sits in quiet meditation and sends out in turn waves of love, joy, compassion and peace to all living beings. This practice is exemplified in words which may go back to the Buddha himself. 'Now may every living thing, young or old, weak or strong, living near or far, known or unknown, living or departed or yet unborn, may every living thing be full of bliss!'

Surely it is in these deeper levels of meditation and charity that Christians and Buddhists may meet and begin to understand one another.

The Challenge to Communication

There is finally the Buddhist challenge to the Christian to present the Gospel in terms of Buddhist thought, in such a way that the Buddhist, from his background and experience, would recognize it as good news. Let me make an attempt to show you what I mean.

The Buddha taught that human life was frustrating and impermanent, that there was nothing in it of abiding reality. He looked at human life and experience in itself, and did not bring God into his consideration. To him the goal towards which to work was Nirvana, with its victory over desire, grasping, attachment, the attainment of perfect being and ineffable peace. A sphere into which men could escape, could in fact be re-born.

May not the Christian say to this, 'Yes, the Buddha was right, life in itself is frustrating, impermanent, not truly real; there is a sphere of perfect being and peace. Is it not possible for that sphere to touch this and so bring an entirely new factor into it? The Christian suggests that God is the forgotten factor, the unrecognized factor, that alters the whole situation. In God's entry into human life in Jesus Christ, a new cause is operating, producing a new effect. A new force is at work in human life which can alter karma and produce a different fruit. You Buddhists

believe that men need many lives in which to attain to the final state of blessing: we Christians believe that men need a new birth, a birth which comes from above and which is given by God.

'We Christians, too, believe in a haven of perfection and peace, of indescribable peace and holiness; to us it is the presence of God. This God is indeed nameless and unknowable, unless he decides to name and reveal himself. We believe that he has done that in Jesus Christ. We confess that often we are too glib and facile in describing the Eternal, Living God —that we need a more reverent, awesome, worshipping, reticent attitude. But we would ask you to examine the experience we report.

'Our experience is of a deep need of strengthening within our own spirit to follow the good way, that in our own strength we are unable to do so; that it is so much easier to follow the selfish, impure, untrue, cowardly impulses. We realize the need of outside help, as well as of an escape outside ourselves. At our highest moments of trust and obedience we have experienced a power, coming from God through Jesus Christ, which indeed demands our co-operation, will and effort, but which is a reinforcement, a salvation from above.'

There is a further problem in communication, and that is in the use of symbols. We cannot manage without some kind of symbols, yet in representing the Gospel it is important that our symbols are both relevant and acceptable.

For example, we Christians talk a great deal about the blood of Christ. Now blood is a repellent symbol to Buddhists, with their reverence for all life; and they find the whole system of Old Testament sacrifices almost revolting. To the Jews the symbol of blood—both as life and as life outpoured—was a telling one. For the Buddhist we need a different expression, something like 'the life that has conquered death', 'the life offered in obedience'.

The two most popular symbols in Buddhism are the wheel and the lotus. The wheel denotes journeying, progress towards a goal. The lotus with its pure flower, growing out of the swamp, speaks of purity in a sinful world—it could speak of being in the world, but remaining unspotted by the world.

If we are to present the Gospel to men of other faiths, we must be ready to examine our symbols very critically, and try to find symbols which will express to them the reality which we have found behind our own Christian symbols.

A Task for the Whole Church

The revival of Buddhism is not something which we Christians should regret; I only wish that there were more real spiritual flame in it, though the renewed emphasis on meditation is a sign of renewing spiritual life. That revival, even as it is, is pressing the Christian Church to present its

gospel in a way which Buddhists will recognize as relevant, and at a deeper level than ever before. It must no longer be a matter for a handful of missionaries or for the small Christian communities in Buddhist countries. The whole Church must be involved: theologians are needed to guide us in our encounter, to ensure that we keep true to the revelation of God in Christ, to suggest wider applications and deeper implications than we have seen hitherto; the masters of the devotional life are needed to probe the encounter on the meditation level; we need religious communities in Buddhist countries, adapted to the Buddhist rule, to teach the way to God through the life of contemplation and prayer. The Church in this land is involved whether it likes it or not, for Buddhist missionaries are at work among us and are making converts. More searching repudiation of selfishness and more costly manifestation of love must be shown as the fruits of Christian faith, for these things are dear to Buddhists. And above all a larger faith in the working of the Eternal Christ, and an expectation to find him already there when we move into deep and friendly encounter with Buddhists in obedience to his commands.

AFRICAN REACTIONS TO CHRISTIANITY

By Dr. Victor E. King, Senior Education Officer, Sierra Leone

1. Introduction

In this talk I shall make and maintain a distinction between the simple 'way of life' which Jesus preached, and of which he was the perfect example, and the elaborate and complicated version which the Church, through the Ages, has sought to impose on would-be Christians. For the former I shall use the term Christianity or the Christian Religion, and for the latter, the term Organized Christianity. My idea of Christianity I get from the Bible. In other words, my authority is the New Testament. For thirty years I have been trying to reconcile the words and deeds of Jesus with the words and deeds of those who claim to be the exponents of Christianity, but I have to admit failure. I say thirty years because it was in 1928 that I entered upon a post-graduate course in Theology, in preparation for what my parents wished, the Ministry. Curiously enough it was on the 'successful' completion of that course that I knew I could never be an orthodox clergyman. My decision therefore was that I would not be a clergyman at all.

My excuse for mentioning this bit of personal history is that the topic for discussion to-night is—African Reactions to Christianity. That was one African's reaction, but it was to organized Christianity. And I have not been the only one to react so decisively. If I had been, I might have

attributed my action to some kink, some personal idiosyncracy. No, it wasn't. A few years later, another graduate went through similar heart-searchings and turned away from the Church. There are many others, not necessarily would-be priests but persons in other walks of life whose reactions have been similar.

Let me here freely confess that I do not consider myself competent to pronounce judgment on the Church, nor do I know enough of theological doctrine to attempt a systematic refutation of the dogmas on which this elaborate superstructure rests. All I have done is to study the life of Christ as depicted in the New Testament and to try to derive from his words and actions guiding principles for my own life. I am not particularly interested, for example, in the divinity of Jesus. I am interested, rather, in his humanity. If, as the Church emphasizes, he did all what he did because he was God, and I know that I am not God, then the life of Jesus becomes almost meaningless to me. I might as well choose Mahatma Gandhi as my ideal, despite his human weaknesses. Unattainable ideals are not only difficult to follow, but often ineffective. Progressive idealism, I think, is better for ordinary folk like me.

2. The Nature of African Life before the Impact of Christianity and Western Civilization

Ethnically, African society was mainly tribal. That meant the existence of secret societies through which traditions, customs and unwritten laws were handed down. It meant that primitive sanctions and superstition played a significant part in maintaining the equilibrium of society. There were tribal rites which were incumbent on all youth. Concepts of marriage and family life differed basically from those acceptable in other countries, particularly Western countries. One instance is the concept of the extended family. Succession was either patrilineal or matrilineal.

Economically, society depended chiefly on agriculture. Land tenure was communal, the authority being vested in the Chief. Barter was a feature of that society.

Politically, the Chief was the ruler. But he was supposed to be advised by the Tribal Authority, which included the elder statesmen and other old men whose memories were longest in the affairs of the tribe. The Chief was 'ex officio' president of the Native Court, although the day-to-day routine was left in the hands of the 'Speaker'.

Religion pervaded African society. In the rituals of the secret societies, in the ceremonials connected with birth, marriage and death, there was clear evidence of 'man's faith in a power beyond himself, which power he sought to befriend, appease or revere in and by acts of worship'. The concepts of that power, of that deity, ranged from crude animism to

the theism of Islam. Ideas of morality were naturally determined by our concepts of God. Hence, for example, what the witch-doctor said was right, hence, avenging the death of a kinsman by any means and at any cost was a duty.

This very brief sketch of the nature of African society two hundred years ago is not meant to suggest anything like a perfect social structure. No, I am not an advocate of the 'noble savage'. It is intended merely to show that before the impact of the West, our society was knit together. It was inevitable that, with school education and the study of science, superstition would disappear and primitive sanctions receive a shattering blow. Tribal rites which bound individuals together would have to be refined or abandoned. Communal labour, the basis of successful tribal agriculture, would have to give way before the onslaught of Money and Machine. Chieftaincy would be compelled to yield some ground to more democratic institutions. The real problem was — How could these changes and improvements take place without throwing society off its balance, without creating what I would term a social vacuum? What was to be the approach and how gradual was the process to be? This was the problem Christian missionaries and Western acculturers faced nearly two hundred years ago in my part of Africa. How then was it tackled? What I am about to say should not be interpreted as prejudice nor as ingratitude. It is honest criticism. Within that criticism comes my own grandfather who, for twenty years, laboured in Temne Land, a very stronghold of Islam. He had to study the Koran meticulously in order to cope with the situation. Besides, I am a product of missionary enterprise and I appreciate what they have done for me. Yet I cannot help thinking that in certain respects not only were they mistaken but also that they acted against the interests of the gospel they were preaching.

3. The Impact of Christianity and Western Civilization

It is a curious, almost ironical fact of history that, in West Africa, the Slave Trade was the bridge over which we crossed to the West. For simultaneously with the abolition of slavery, thanks to the initiative, the persistence and Christian faith of British abolitionists and philanthropists, schools and churches were established. At first in Sierra Leone, later in Nigeria, Gold Coast and the Gambia, British rule was introduced. The impact of cultures had begun.

I do not intend to dwell on the minutiae of this impact or clash of cultures. They would require a separate talk. I shall limit myself, as far as possible, to the impact of Christianity on the primitive culture that I have described. First of all, I think that the general approach of the Christian Missions was wrong in that they denounced every native custom and practice as pagan and bad. They did not take the trouble to sift

the good from the bad and make use of the good, however little there was. Take the secret societies, for example. I know that it has always been very difficult for an outsider to become a member of a secret society, and I am not suggesting that most clergymen should have become members. What I am saying is that instead of open denunciation, they should have been more sympathetic in their attitude. If they had been, they would have won the confidence of the people and Christianity would not have been referred to as a white man's religion and regarded as an imposition. The initiation ceremonies might be crude and somewhat offensive, but they were meant to elicit courage and endurance in youths. The purpose was not bad, anyway. After all, an important function of these societies was to train youth for manhood, so that they would become worthy members of the community and capable of defending their territory in time of war. I suggest that it was possible for missionaries to have made use of influential members of the native community in an attempt to purge the societies of the more barbarous of their rites.

Another pertinent example is that of marriage and the practice of polygamy. Polygamy in native life is not practised merely for the indulgence of sex. It is an economic proposition and, socially, it enhances prestige. That is one reason why some parents offer their daughters to the Chief. (Two personal experiences to be described.)

Besides, invariably, it is the first or senior wife of a polygamist who finds the others. She needs help with the domestic chores and for work on the farm; hired labour is not usually available, and where it is, there is not the means of paying for it. So that, when the Christian minister denounces polygamy in no uncertain terms, without offering alternate solutions for the practical problems which polygamy solves, the minister's words just do not register. Do I appear to be an advocate of polygamy? I am not. To me the problem relates to one's concept of the worth of human personality. Is a woman a chattel, an item of property, a mere tool for the gratification of one's desires? If the man thinks so then it is his education that is defective rather than his morality. It is education that can redress the balance and make a primitive people realize that the sexes are equal. I am not a polygamist, but that is not because I think it is unChristian, but because I consider that I have married an equal and marrying another will be derogatory to her personality. Besides, my conception of love makes it impossible for three or four of us to share it at the same time. I really think the missionaries should have been more tolerant at the beginning in order to win the confidence of the people they were out to convert. As a matter of fact, the problem has begun to solve itself, now that the girls are being educated in larger numbers. They positively refuse to be offered, and they assert themselves by refusing mates.

Let me pass on now to another aspect of the impact of Christianity

on native life. One thing that has seriously militated against the spread of Christianity in Africa is *denominationalism and sectarianism* with their concomitant, *bigotry*. It might be all right for several groups of Christians to go to Africa and preach the gospel. But when these groups resort to open rivalry to the extent of one group challenging the authenticity of another, the *heathen* are bewildered. At the same time that they are preaching brotherly love, they are fighting themselves openly and secretly. If these groups were all sincere, why could not they agree on fields of operation? If Christ were to come to Africa to-day and see the things that are being done *in his name*, in South, East, Central and West Africa, would he be pleased, and would he say: 'Well done, my good and faithful servants, I appreciate the way in which you are preserving Christian civilization in South Africa; I can understand why Roman Catholics must never co-operate with Protestants; these sub-humans called Natives are certainly incapable of making profitable use of the land, so their ownership of land must be controlled and restricted; yes, for being so faithful and considerate, enter ye into the joy of your Lord.'

The disunity among so-called Christians stems from doctrinal controversies which have become the heritage of Organized Christianity. The history of the Christian Church is stained with blood, despite the shining example of the Prince of Peace. Now the Christian Church is passing on that undesirable heritage to Africa. The man-made barriers of denominationalism and intolerance prevent the Church from making a serious impression on the soul of the African. Contrast all this with two simple texts which, to me, epitomize the Christian Religion: (i) 'If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?' (ii) 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.'

Another factor that has militated against Christianity in Africa is the quality of many of those who preach the gospel. During the nineteenth century and the opening decade of the twentieth, from the intellectual point of view at least, it was the cream of the African community that volunteered for the Ministry. Whatever were their failings in other respects, they had enough education to enable them to explain and interpret the gospel. To-day, with comparatively few exceptions, clergymen are simply unable to preach a sensible sermon or hold out in serious discussion without resorting to platitudes. And the age is too critical to accept platitudes. I am expecting someone to take me up on this point and ask me to amplify my statement. I shall, then. However, my train of thought is this: It would appear that the Church to-day is so short of clergy that almost anyone who comes forward and says, 'I have a call', is accepted, regardless of his mental and moral equipment for so select a calling. The result is that jokes about the sermons and escapades of clergymen are too many and too frequently told. The clergy, somehow, do not

seem to command the respect they should. The only reason that is safe for me to give is that the selection is not sufficiently rigid.

As regards foreign missionaries, the majority of Africans tend to regard them with suspicion. As a result we tend to interpret every statement and action of theirs against that background of suspicion. We are always looking for evidence of their sincerity. In this case, the reason is easier to discover, I think. In the past, many foreign missionaries allowed themselves to become the allies of the imperialism which sought *to keep the African in his place*. Others failed to understand the natural aspirations of the African and constituted themselves oracles of prescience. Instead of reasoning with us they ridicule our aspirations. Two instances will serve as illustration. . . . As a result, distrust creeps in.

Other foreign missionaries are definitely insincere. Now this is a bold statement, especially when I remember that our Lord said, 'Judge not . . . ' But lest you think I am talking through my hat, here is an actual experience . . . (the priest at Lunsar). Why did he do it?

Let me now bring to a head my main thesis. We Africans have lived a primitive life until comparatively recent times. We were rudely awakened from that primitive sleep by the Slave Trade. Now we are fully awake and conscious of our shortcomings. We are also anxious to catch up with the tide of world civilization and are prepared to make use of all available short-cuts. But there are no short-cuts in a moral evolution. For that reason we sometimes fall by the way. I believe that Christianity is one of the most powerful forces that can guide us in that moral evolution, especially as Christian Ethics does not move in a circle but focuses on Jesus as a pattern of behaviour. At first we did embrace Christianity heart and soul, but we have been greatly disappointed by reason of what is happening in Africa, by reason of the strife among and the inhumanity and hypocrisy of the so-called Christian nations. Even at the individual level the loudest Christians are the biggest hypocrites. *No man can become good except by coming in contact with what is good.* Whose example is the African to copy? Our Lord said, 'Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.' He meant, I take it, that Christianity should succeed by reason of its *inherent* quality, not by resting on artificial props. It was to be a light and it was to be attractive by reflecting goodness, brotherly love and charity. We need more samples of this practical Christianity. I shall give you one example of what I mean (1954 air crash). But theory is so divorced from practice that many Africans have accepted that as the natural thing. They go to church, they pay their dues in order to keep up their respectability, so that when they die their corpses will receive a Christian burial. Some do not even pay their dues until they have some premonition of death. Incidentally, the sale of that particular indulgence is becoming quite a racket. (Example.) The Christianity of the African,

I fear, is rapidly degenerating into a mere polish or veneer. It does not make the slightest difference to his way of life. I can drink myself drunk on Saturday night, until 2 a.m., as long as I am able to go to church on Sunday. I can have an illicit affair at any time if I am prepared to confess it to the priest. Shall we sin that grace may abound? God forbid.

A FAITH FOR THE PRESENT AGE

By Dr. S. G. F. Brandon, Professor of Comparative Religion in the University of Manchester

I am very conscious that I have laid myself open to a charge of gross presumption in accepting an invitation to discourse on 'a faith for the present age'. For it implies that I know of such a faith, and that it is different from Christianity. But such presumption would be too gross to be credible, so I do not feel obliged to defend myself on that score. However, my purpose in speaking about 'a faith for the present age' does require some explanation.

To this end I would draw your attention to the theme of our Conference. It has been defined as 'Christianity: the Faith for the World'. Now, since I think that the emphasis here falls on the article 'the', meaning that 'Christianity is *the* Faith for the World', we have a significant situation in that a comparison is thereby implied. As I see it, liberal-minded Christians are becoming increasingly conscious of the challenge which is constituted by the *very fact* of the existence of the other religions of mankind. For, quite apart from any counter-claims which may be advanced by Buddhism or Islam, the fact that, since the emergence of Christianity, the greater part of the human race has continued in its allegiance to other religions, and, so far as the human mind can foresee, is likely to continue so, does constitute a most serious challenge to the traditional Christian claim that Christ is the unique saviour of mankind. But it would seem that the realization of this challenge is new. In earlier ages Christians have been so completely confident that Christianity was the only and exclusive means ordained by God for salvation that they looked upon other religions as either the works of the devil or the products of human superstition and sin. This latter view finds eloquent expression in the words of Bishop Heber's hymn, which for so many generations has been sung with deep missionary fervour:

What though the spicy breezes
Blow soft o'er Java's isle,
Though every prospect pleases
And only man is vile:
In vain with lavish kindness
The gifts of God are strown,
The heathen in his blindness
Bows down to wood and stone.

And how significant is the confidence and firm dedication which inspire the next verse:

Can we, whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high,
Can we to men benighted
The lamp of life deny?
Salvation! O salvation!
The joyful sound proclaim,
Till each remotest nation
Has learned Messiah's name.

It was in this spirit that in the early years of the last century a missionary society is recorded to have reminded one of its missionaries, who had written a sympathetic account of Hinduism, that he had been sent to India, not to study Hinduism, but to destroy it.

But to-day, for a variety of reasons which the other speakers at this Conference will undoubtedly explain, this supreme confidence in the exclusive validity of Christianity no longer inspires many thoughtful Christian people. Instead, while they recognize that there is much that is repugnant to good sense and decent conduct in other religions, they are conscious that these religions embody the spiritual hopes and aspirations and the spiritual experiences of the greater part of the human race throughout countless centuries, and much of this tradition commands respect both for its mystical achievements and moral worth. Consequently there is now a readiness to look with sympathy on those features of other religions which appear congenial to Christian ideas and values --one has even heard the remark made that it is better to be a good heathen than a bad Christian. However, this new attitude of tolerance and sympathy is basically illogical when seen in the light of orthodox belief. For what has become traditional Christianity, whether in its Catholic or Protestant form, is essentially a soteriology so constructed that its acceptance automatically precludes the possibility that men and women can attain the eternal salvation of their souls by any other way. In other words, according to Christian belief the whole of mankind is doomed by origin and conduct to damnation and there is only one way of escaping this fate, namely, by accepting Jesus Christ as saviour and in turn accepting all that this recognition of Jesus implies in faith and practice. When set out in this way, Christian orthodoxy may well seem to us intolerable

in its assumption of an exclusive authority for the Church as representing the only divinely-ordained means of salvation for the whole of mankind. That we should feel this does indeed indicate the measure of our departure from that complete assurance about the truth of the Christian claim which characterized our ancestors. And in this connection I think that it is salutary for us to reflect on the fact that earlier generations of Christians were the more consistent, for, in accordance with the logic of their faith, they assigned unbaptised infants to limbo, a special department of Hell, while Dante, that great exponent of mediaeval Christianity, found the godly pagans of antiquity in Hell, though immune from its torments.

Given the traditional form of Christian orthodoxy, we are accordingly faced with what appears to be an insoluble problem when we contemplate the position of Christianity relative to the other religions in the modern world. For, however genuine may be our willingness to recognize the spiritual achievements of such a faith as, for example, Buddhism, we are obliged in terms of Christian orthodoxy to condemn it as offering not only a useless, but a misleading substitute, to the only God-given means of salvation, namely, Christianity.

As I see the problem facing us here, I think that I can best make a contribution to its solution by setting before you the conclusions of my studies in two different fields. The first of these conclusions is drawn from my Wilde Lectures in Natural and Comparative Religion, which I gave at Oxford in 1954-57 and which I am now preparing for publication. These lectures concerned the nature and destiny of Man in the great religions, and I want now to indicate to you briefly what I think such a comparative study shows of the fundamental spiritual needs of man, remembering that any faith, in order to be adequate, must satisfy such needs.

We can begin our story here with the very emergence of *homo sapiens*, true man, in the archaeological record, i.e. some 50,000 years ago. These men of the Old Stone Age, the first human beings of whom we have knowledge, appear to have been primarily concerned about three things—food, birth and death. Their concern with food, or rather with the supply of food, is, of course, natural, and every generation since that time has been similarly preoccupied. But the other two interests are more significant for our present purpose. The evidence which we have of them is curious and arresting. Thus concern about birth is symbolized by the many female figurines, found on Palaeolithic sites, with the maternal features emphasized but the faces left blank. Preoccupation with the mystery of death finds expression in the burial customs of these first men —and here we must note that it is only the human race that cares for its dead and this care has been exercized as far back as our records go; the

other animals never concern themselves about their dead. Now this mortuary care, which is thus so typically human, was closely connected, I believe, in the mind of Palaeolithic man with that concern about birth which is represented by his curious female figurines. As I see it, Palaeolithic man, fearful and despondent about the fact of death, turned with hope to the promise of new life symbolized in the maternal attributes of the woman. Hence it would appear that at the very dawn of our race death was felt to be a problem which demanded some solution. In carefully burying his dead and equipping them in the grave with many of the necessities of this life, such as food, tools and ornaments, Palaeolithic man gave evidence of the fact that he did not accept death as definitive but believed that the dead had some form of *post-mortem* existence. How he envisaged this existence we cannot tell, but his evident concern with birth suggests that he saw in the womb of the mother the way of return to life of those who had been laid lifeless in the womb of the earth.

Whatever may be the right interpretation of the relation of birth to death in the mind of Palaeolithic man, and on such a matter we cannot be dogmatic, it is quite certain that in this remote age man was already concerned with the mystery of death--so much concerned indeed that he was ready to place some of his precious food and other valuable equipment in the graves of the dead, because he believed that the dead needed them.

Now here we have a fact of supreme significance for our understanding of the fundamental intuitions and needs of human nature. We see that as soon as man appears on the stage of history he is urgently conscious of death and concerned to deal with its challenge according to his ability. And I think that we have every reason for believing that he did not just contemplate the spectacle of death in terms of the needs of those who had died; but the death of others presented him with a personal problem, for it caused him to anticipate his own death.

That this consciousness of his own mortality and preoccupation with the problem which it constituted became the source of man's religious faith and practice the religions of mankind attest. And here we must notice too that, according to the Palaeolithic evidence, this concern with death existed before we have any certain proof that man could conceive of deity as his creator and the arbiter of his destiny. In other words, man's religion originally stemmed from his concern with his own mortality and not, as Rudolf Otto maintained, from some innate sense of the numinous.

When we turn to consider the religions of mankind in this connection during the historic period, we see that preoccupation with death and the related issue of destiny continues to be basic, although the forms in which that preoccupation finds expression are various. In seeking to understand the significance of this preoccupation in its various forms of expression,

we should notice first that these forms divide into two distinct classes. On the one hand there are those in which preoccupation with death appears to be motivated by the instinct for survival, for the assurance that the individual person will continue to exist in some tolerable, if not pleasant way, after the dread experience. On the other hand, a basic concern with death can be productive of an attitude of mind which will welcome death as the extinction of individual consciousness, when such consciousness is regarded as the source of all suffering and woe. To the evaluation of this fundamental difference we must presently return after we have considered more closely those various forms in which preoccupation with death has found expression.

Let us then first examine the various modes of man's reaction to the prospect of death which are inspired by the instinct for survival. I call this an instinct advisedly, because it appears natural for any living organism to seek to preserve its life, and in the case of man, who is capable of reflective thought, it would seem impossible for him naturally to be able to envisage his own self-extinction. However, since the phenomena of death must necessarily inspire fear, it is also natural for man to seek for some assurance that death will not after all utterly destroy the ego or fatally harm it. Of the ways in which this instinct for survival has expressed itself, the history of religions provides some curious information. For example, it shows us that in his most primitive forms of mortuary cultus man has envisaged the dead as living on in some form in their graves, where they require nourishment. Hence we find throughout the ancient Near East and elsewhere that offerings of food have been regularly made to the dead—in some places, as for example at Ugarit (the modern Ras Shamra), tombs were actually constructed with conduits to permit the passage of libations from the surface to the dead lying in the sepulchral chamber below. Such a primitve conception of the state of the dead appears to rest upon a natural inability to conceive of death as involving some radical change—belief in survival in this case is clearly instinctive and apparently untroubled by the questions which must obviously arise in more sophisticated minds. An interesting and instructive variant of this primitive eschatology is that which accepted without question the idea of survival, but which held that *post-mortem* existence is wholly wretched and unmitigated by any hope of deliverance. Notable examples of this pessimistic view occur in the ancient Mesopotamian concept of *kur-nu-gi-a*, 'the land of no-return', in the Hebrew belief in Sheol, and in Homer's picture of Hades. In all these conceptions the dead, both the good and the bad, suffer the same common fate of having to live a shadowy life amid dust and darkness, deep down in the earth. The curious thing about this belief is that the despair which it engendered would have been removed, if those who held it could have gone a step further and accepted death as total extinction. But this they were

apparently unable to do, and so their conviction about survival, based upon a realistic appreciation of the physical consequences of death, inspired in them dread and despondency about the ultimate issue of life—belief in survival in this instance was certainly no piece of wishful thinking, for scepticism would surely have been more comforting.

For the evolution of religious beliefs, another form of the survival conception has a very great significance. This particular form first emerges in ancient Egypt during the third millennium B.C. In the celebrated *Pyramid Texts* it is found that the dead pharoah believed that by being ritually identified with the god Osiris in his death he would share in the benefits of this god's resurrection, for, according to Egyptian mythology, Osiris had once been murdered, but by divine or magical means he had been restored to life. Hence already by about 2300 B.C. we see that the concept of the saviour-god had appeared. In essence this concept was based upon the fear that death would mean personal annihilation unless divine succour were forthcoming. In the history of religions many variations of this belief are found. It was embodied in the mystery-religions of the Graeco-Roman world, and its supreme example is, of course, Christianity itself, where salvation from ultimate death is achieved through the Christian disciple's identification with Christ, the god-man who died and rose again. There is, however, a notable variant of this belief that salvation from death depends upon divine action. Judaism, Zoroastrianism and Islam provide examples of the idea that the supreme deity decrees, by his own *fiat* and without the intervention of a mediator, the resurrection of the dead to a new or restored life; this resurrection, moreover, is followed by a judgment in which the eternal destinies of men are decided by reference to the quality of their former lives on earth.[1]

Another notable form of eschatology, which is also inspired by the desire for the survival of the individual consciousness, but which finds expression in more sophisticated terms, is that which is based on the conviction that the soul is intrinsically immortal. According to this view human nature is compounded of two fundamentally different things, namely, an ethereal soul of divine origin and a physical body which is formed of the substance of this world. This belief in its classical form occurs in Orphism and the philosophy of Plato. Its influence was very great in Graeco-Roman society at the time of the emergence of Christianity, and it has profoundly conditioned the Christian doctrine of man. From the point of view of our particular interest here, we must note that this theory of the soul's intrinsic immortality was calculated to comfort and encourage men, apprehensive in the prospect of death, by assuring

[1]In Osirianism, as in Christianity, the saviour becomes, illogically, also the judge. This subject has been discussed by the present writer in an article entitled 'A Problem of the Osirian Judgement of the Dead', shortly to appear in *Numen*.

them that their own essential self was by nature immune from the disintegration of death. Salvation, according to this estimate of human nature, depended in most instances upon acquiring the right *gnosis* or knowledge—in other words, the individual had to realize his true nature so that he could pursue the proper course for the emancipation of his immortal soul from its fleshly prison.

We have now briefly surveyed the chief forms in which man's preoccupation with death has found expression when that preoccupation has been motivated by the instinct for survival. We have noted that this common instinct has produced various forms of response: sometimes the assurance has been sought that the menace of death might be circumvented by magical means or divine aid or that immunity from it is guaranteed by the intrinsic nature of the soul; sometimes attention has been more directed to obtaining a happy lot in the after-life; sometimes the instinct for survival has even resulted in the belief that the individual would survive death, but would undergo an awful change and thereafter be doomed to a most miserable existence.

To complete our survey we must now notice the great exception to this general attitude towards death which I mentioned earlier in passing. This exception takes the form of fearing death as an awful repetitive process which human beings must unendingly endure, unless they can achieve emancipation from its necessity. The classic form of this belief is found in the two great religions which originated in India, namely, Hinduism and Buddhism, but it also occurred in ancient Greece in Orphism and Platonic thought and in certain Gnostic systems. In India the belief was embodied in the twin doctrines of *samsara* and *karma*, according to which the individual soul has to pass through an unending succession of incarnations, the nature of each of these for good or ill being determined by one's conduct in earlier lives. The prospect of this unending cycle of births and deaths, with all their attendant suffering, was so appalling that salvation was conceived as the cessation of existence as an individual centre of consciousness. Accordingly in Hinduism *moksa* (release) was conceived as the merging of the individual *atman* or soul with the cosmic *Atman* rather as a drop of water is merged and loses its identity when it falls into the ocean. In Buddhism salvation was called *nirvana*, which means literally 'blowing out' as the flame of a candle is blown out—the state of those who attain *nirvana* is thus described in a Buddhism text: 'Their old karma is exhausted, no new karma is being produced; their hearts are freed from longing after future life: the cause of their existence being destroyed, and no new yearnings springing up within them, they, the wise, are extinguished like this lamp' (*Ratana Sutta* vii, 14).

This identification of the sense of individuality as the source of all suffering and the corresponding conception of salvation as amounting virtually to individual extinction have a profound significance when we

consider what is the witness of mankind's religions concerning the fundamental spiritual needs which have to be met, if a faith is to be adequate for the present age. It means in effect that we have to take account of the fact that the evaluations of human nature and destiny in Christianity and in the great religions which have stemmed from India diverge fundamentally. For, whereas the whole structure of Christian theology is based upon the premiss that in the scheme of divine creation the individual human soul, conscious of itself, is the essential unit and is never to be absorbed into the deity, in Indian religious thought individual consciousness is the fundamental illusion and the cause of all pain and suffering—hence salvation means the elimination of this fatal illusion of the existence of an individual self or soul.

However, before we consider this issue more fully, we must see that we properly appreciate our findings so far. We have seen that, from the very beginning, the religions of mankind, various though they have been in expression, have been rooted in a common centre of concern, namely, the mystery of death. Its adequacy in supplying a satisfactory answer to that fundamental challenge to all human values has been the ultimate criterion by which each religion has been and is to be judged. For upon the significance which it assigns to death depends the validity of every estimate of man's nature and destiny, his place in the scheme of the universe and his relation to whatever power is conceived as creating and directing that universe.

We have now to face the question whether the Christian evaluation of human destiny in its traditional form can be considered as providing an adequate interpretation for the present age in the light of the comparative study of religion. As we have seen, the logic of the orthodox form of Christian belief demands the adoption of an exclusive attitude towards other religions. To accept this situation means the rejection of all other interpretations of human destiny as false, which is tantamount to asserting that the larger part of mankind down through the ages has been mistaken about the significance of life.

Fortunately modern historical research saves us from the obligation of accepting orthodox Christianity at its own evaluation, and it enables us to see that this orthodoxy is the product of fortuitous circumstances, so that its claim to represent the original form of the faith is gravely suspect.

The writings of Paul reveal to us the many different factors which were already operating within two decades of the Crucifixion to shape the content of the infant Christian faith. Quite apart from the basic conflict between Paul and the Church of Jerusalem about the nature and mission of Jesus, we find evidence in the Corinthian Epistles of the need to accommodate the original Hebrew estimate of human nature as a psycho-physical organism to the Greek view of man as a duality consisting of a material body and an ethereal soul. Herein we find the beginning of a process

which was destined in due course to provide the essential structure of Christian soteriology. But the point of especial interest to us in the situation implicit here lies in the fact that Christianity, starting in a Jewish environment, moved out, mainly westwards, into the Roman Empire, where it became established and where during the next four centuries its theology was gradually formulated. This process meant that the great doctrines of the Church were thought out in a Graeco-Roman *milieu* by men whose culture was Greek or Latin and who naturally expressed their beliefs in the categories of thought in which they had been educated. In other words, by the accident of its geographical movement, Christianity evolved in a Western ethos and naturally assumed the validity of the Western evaluation of man, or rather, as it then was, the Greek evaluation.

Now we may ask, what might have happened in those early formative years, if Christianity had moved eastwards, instead of westwards, and if it had become established then in India and not in the Roman Empire? Generally in the study of history such hypothetical questions as 'what would have happened, if . . . ?', are scorned as useless, but in this context there is a real case for considering such a possibility. For Christian soteriology is not a Jewish thing, in fact it violates the fundamental principles of Judaism; it is essentially the product of the Hellenistic mind. And that such is its nature was due, as we have already noted, to the *chance* that in its formative stages the faith was carried westward and not eastward. For, let us note, the direction of its propagation does indeed appear to have been a matter of chance; even if Paul's entry into Europe was due to divine prompting, as *Acts* xiv, 8-10, suggests, the crossing over from Asia Minor into Macedonia was not really decisive, because already Christianity had entered the sphere of Graeco-Roman culture when it moved into Syria and the name 'Christian' first became known in Antioch.

But, if Christianity had moved eastward, so that its theology had been thought out by Indian and not by Greek minds, what might have happened? Of one thing we can at least be certain—the death of Christ would not have been interpreted as a propitiatory sacrifice for sin. The sufferings of Christ would undoubtedly have been appreciated as proof of his love for mankind; but it is likely that Christ would rather have been seen as a great revealer of saving truth to mankind after the manner in which Vishnu and the Buddha are regarded. And salvation would probably have been conceived as delivery from the ignorance and error which veils from man his true nature and destiny, and not redemption from the condemnation of an angry deity or rescue from the forces of evil. How the original Christian view of man as a psycho-physical organism might have been combined with the Indian idea of *samsara*, i.e. the transmigration of souls, provides a more difficult problem, but when we recall that the Jewish Christian view was effectively, if illogically, combined by Paul with the Orpheo-Platonic doctrine of the soul, it would

seem that the difficulty could have been surmounted. But could the Hebrew view, which was clearly accepted by Jesus, that each human being was specially created by God, have been reconciled with the Indian view that the idea of individuality is the fundamental illusion from which all pain and suffering arise? Here it would seem that we encounter an essential difference in the estimate of man which ultimately stems from a different evaluation of human experience. And here in turn it would seem that we come to the crux of the issue before us.

We seem indeed to be called upon to decide which of two opposing views of human nature and destiny accords the better with modern knowledge and the fundamental intuitions of our minds. On the one hand we have that estimate which stems from the cultures of the ancient Near East and which we may now call the Western view of man: it embodies the belief that individual consciousness is the highest form of existence, and it is inspired by the desire that this consciousness should survive death and continue for ever thereafter. Its supreme aim is the Beatific Vision, according to which the individual soul, still retaining its individuality, gazes for ever in rapture on God. Against this concept we have that which, originating in India, spread in its Buddhist form throughout Asia and which might, therefore, be termed the Eastern view of man and his destiny. According to this estimate, what we take for the individual soul or self is a sensation of consciousness which is produced by the temporary combination of a number of different factors, both physical and mental. Because this illusion begets the desire for its own continuance, we endeavour to seek for security and permanence by attaching ourselves to what is inherently impermanent—hence come pain and suffering. To struggle free from this illusion, to seek peace from its feverish immersion in the stream of existence in this world of time and space, is accordingly the highest wisdom, and so Nirvana is tantamount to individual extinction.

Thus appears the issue before us, when we interrogate the history of religions for guidance about a faith for the present age. Quite simply it would seem that we must decide whether our aim should be the Beatific Vision or Nirvana.

MARXISM: A COMPETITOR

By the Rev. O. Fielding Clarke, M.A., B.D., Stephenson Research Fellow at Sheffield University

In considering Marxism as a world competitor with Christianity, I shall confine myself strictly to my brief. I shall deal firstly with what Marxism is and secondly with why it is gaining ground. This is in itself so vast a subject that there will be no time to state the arguments brought *against* Marxism. My objective will be the limited one of trying to define Marxism and to say why it has a growing world-appeal which rivals that of Christian missions.

Yes—a growing *world* appeal! For while in Britain men warm their hands at the fire by reminding themselves of how British Communist Party membership has declined since the war, of how 'out-moded' Marx is, of 'the god that failed', of how events in Hungary have opened the eyes of 'dupes and sentimentalists', of how Howard Fast has become the latest recruit to the procession of ex-Communist writers and intellectuals, and so on—suddenly nasty cold draughts disturb their peace. I pick up for example by chance a copy of U.N.E.S.C.O.'s *Courier*. Here is a list of the books most frequently translated throughout the world during the past few years. The Bible, of course, tops the list (I say to myself). . . . But it is *not* the Bible any more. Instead I see the name of Lenin, and I also notice that close on the heels of the Bible, now placed second, are other Marxist classics. On turning to *The Times* for those comfortable words to a cruel world which it knows so well how to administer, I find there is something going on called a 'Fight for Latin America'. Everything is apparently no longer 'in the bag' for the 'free' world in that vast continent. Half its hundred millions do not earn a living wage, 'the restraining influence' (*sic*) of the Church has declined, and to crown all, 'the Communists are planting ideas not only in the minds of the politically naïve man in the street (*Times* Leader-ese for the hungry working-man) but of people who regard themselves as nationalists, and who would be outraged to be charged with having even Communist leanings'. Even apparently in respectable newspapers, while the print is the print of Latin-America, the voice is Moscow's!

Over a hundred years ago Marx began the Communist Manifesto with the words 'A spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of Communism': and though the spectre has often been exorcized by the high priests of capitalism, and its ideology debunked by dons, the spectre continues to put on weight from one world-war to the other—indeed a lusty youth!

Well: what is this Marxism, the creed of Communism? Historically, as Lenin said, Marxism is the heir of three things: classical German philosophy in the shape of Hegelianism; classical British political economy

in the shape of George Adam Smith, and classical French revolutionary thought.

I will consider Marxism under four heads, partly following and generously borrowing from the lucid exposition of it to be found in Chapter Four of the official *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*. The four heads are:

(1) Dialectical Materialism,
(2) Historical Materialism,
(3) Marxist Economics,
(4) The Strategy and Tactics of Revolution.

(1) Dialectical Materialism

The philosophy of Marxism is called dialectical materialism because its method of study and approach to nature is dialectical, while its conception of nature is materialistic. It is Hegelian dialectics turned upside down, or rather, as Marx would say, right way up, with feet instead of the head on the ground.

Dialectics, as I need not remind this audience, is the method of arriving at truth by discussion inherited from the great age of Greek philosophy. A statement or thesis is made, it is contradicted by an antithesis, and in the debate a higher synthesis is evolved which includes the partial truths contained in the thesis and antithesis respectively. In dialectical materialism this process of thinking is applied to nature, which is in constant movement and which develops as the result of opposing forces wihin it.

Speaking of Marxist dialectical method, the Party History notes four ways in which it differs from what it calls 'metaphysics':

(*a*) ' . . . dialectics does not regard nature as an accidental agglomeration of things.' All phenomena are organically connected and interdependent. Nothing can be understood in isolation from its context.

(*b*) ' . . . nature is not a state of rest or immobility . . . but a state of continuous movement and change.' Therefore the important thing is not what appears to be durable at the moment, but the discovery within the object to be studied of what is passing away, and above all of what is now arising and developing.

(*c*) The process of development is not smooth. Small changes go on for a period, and then comes a moment when the small quantitative changes produce a dramatic qualitative change. In other words, 'it is the last straw which breaks the camel's back'. The example most often given is the change that takes place when water is boiled. Heat is added degree by degree, but there comes a moment when, on passing under normal conditions from 99° to 100° centigrade, the water boils and is converted *qualitatively* from a liquid to a vapour. The last degree does it.

(*d*) Internal contradictions are inherent in all things. Everything has 'its negative and positive sides, a past and a future, something dying away and something developing'. The struggle between these two aspects 'constitutes the internal content of the process of development'.

'In its proper meaning,' Lenin says, 'dialectics is the study of the contradiction *within the very essence of things*' (Lenin, *Philosophical Notebooks*). Again, 'Development is the "struggle" of opposites' (Lenin, *Selected Works*).

We now turn from Marxist dialectical *method* to Marxist *materialism* itself; here three points are to be noted:

(*a*) While idealist philosophy regards the world as the embodiment of an 'absolute idea', a 'universal spirit', 'consciousness', Marx's philosophical materialism holds that the world is by its very nature *material*. The world develops according to the laws of movement of matter, and there is no need to suppose the existence of any universal spirit. Lenin quotes with approval the saying of Heraclitus: 'The world, the all in one, was not created by any god or man, but was, is and ever will be a living flame systematically flaring up and systematically dying down.' *Marxism is therefore godless.* It denies the transcendent.

(*b*) As against idealism Marxian materialism holds that matter, nature, being, exist objectively apart from the mind and outside it, that matter is primary since it is the source of all sensations, that mind is secondary and derivative. Mind is the highest product of matter. 'It is impossible to separate thought from matter that thinks,' says Marx, and Lenin caps this by saying, 'The world picture is a picture of how matter moves and of how "*matter thinks*".' Archbishop Temple in *Nature, Man and God*, points out that if we are only considering the time series, the temporal priority of matter over mind is of course true.

(*c*) Marxian materialism is completely opposed to Kantianism. It denies the existence of unknowable 'things in themselves'. It asserts that reality can be known, and that though our knowledge of all things may not be complete, such knowledge is real as far as it goes, and can be verified by experiment.

The application of the foregoing to the social and political sphere is obvious. Dialectical materialism is the parent of historical materialism, and this is the second most important element in the Marxist theoretical system.

(2) Historical Materialism

If, as dialectical materialism asserts, the phenomena of nature are all interconnected and a certain dialectical pattern runs right through reality, then it follows that human history, the growth and decay of social orders, is not a chapter of accidents, nor is it the product of the individual wills or whims of leading personalities who come and go no one knows how.

History proceeds according to laws just as biological evolution proceeds according to its laws. There are no mysteries. There may be elements of the unknown, but they are not unknowable. If we can discover the law by which history develops, then much that has been obscure will become clear, and we shall know, broadly speaking, what we have to deal with and what are the real forces operating in history at a given epoch.

The clue to history is production and the human relationships involved in production. Social orders and the whole realm of politics are only a reflection of the material basis. At first, according to Marx, the most primitive society knew nothing of private property, and tribes worked together communally to obtain food and shelter. With the invention of tools society became divided between those who possess tools and those who do not. The former, because they produce more efficiently, end by dominating the latter. So all through history, even in the most complex societies, we have two classes, those who own and control the forces of production and those who do not. It is always changes in the mode of production which lie at the root of the big changes in history. Capitalism, for example, replaced feudalism not because of some new ideology but because the development of small-scale workshops in the towns, producing for a market, demanded a bourgeois freedom unknown to the feudal order. The bourgeois manufacturers and merchants replaced the feudal nobility, but bourgeois production itself called into being a new exploited class. In place of the serf tied to the soil we have the landless workman free from the soil and free (in a Pickwickian sense) to sell his labour to those who owned the means of production. The class-struggle was now not that between the towns and the barons, but between the bourgoisie and the proletariat. In capitalist society the class struggle, which in varying forms has continued all through history, reaches its final phase. This is the 'last fight' referred to in the chorus of 'The Internationale'. Once the land and the means of production, distribution and exchange belong to the whole community, economic exploitation by one group becomes impossible. The dialectic of development, of course, continues, but on a higher plane and no longer in the form of class-struggle.

(3) Marxist Economics

We must now notice the distinctive feature of Marxist economics, which as we have already said stems from classical British political economy. I am not an economist nor, I imagine, are most of my audience, so that I will be brief. The value of commodities for the purpose of marketing and exchange was held by the dominant school of classical economists to derive from labour. Air, for example, which is in universal demand, is from the market point of view 'valueless', since no one works to produce it. It is the labour expended in the extraction of raw materials,

in the processes of agriculture and manufacture, etc., which creates value. Marx developed the labour-theory of value by declaring that what the employer pays his work-people for is not labour-*hours* but labour-*power*. The value of this latter is the average number of hours required by a worker to enable him to support life and reproduce a fresh generation of workers. Now as the employer possesses the means of production—the factory, for example—and only through access to this can the worker earn his daily bread, the employer has the whip hand. He compels the worker to expend his labour-power for longer than is necessary for him to earn wages for the feeding and clothing of himself and his family. Thus 'surplus value' is created which the employer appropriates. Hence profit; hence capital accumulation; hence the buying-out of small firms; and so ruthless competition, booms and slumps, wage-cuts, unemployment, and finally a revolutionary situation. The contradiction between factory production (that is, social production) and private appropriation of the product of industry cannot be resolved under bourgeois capitalism, and thus socialism becomes the only way out.

The labour-theory of value is not in favour with modern economists unless they be Marxists, but as Carew Hunt rightly remarks, Keynes was demonstrably wrong when he wrote that *Das Capital* was 'an obsolete work devoid of interest'. It is clearly of *world-wide* interest judging by the number of languages into which it is still being translated. Carew Hunt, a fair but stern critic of Marxism, thinks that Marx's central thesis has yet to be disproved in the only way it can be disproved, i.e. by history. Capitalism, we admit, has a 'new look', trades unions and the welfare state (not to mention the famous 'Super profits of imperial exploitation') have also drastically modified the working of the dialectic, yet Marx's picture of capitalist society, tightly gripped by economic laws so that it '*cannot* do the things that it would', still seems to be uncannily like the truth.

There is also a further point about which I shall say more in the concluding half of my paper. The theory of surplus value when put into simple, crude terms is very far from being abstract, lifeless dogma. The men and women who sweat all day for a mere pittance, in other words, the majority of the human race, realize in their own experience that while *they* do the hard work which gives to land and raw materials their market value, a privileged minority, with clean collars and white hands, are managing somehow to get rather a big 'rake-off'. Out of date Marx's theory may be to the professional economist in his armchair, but to the majority whose labour is still sweated it has deep significance. Carew Hunt in closing his remarks on the subject of Marxist economic theory quotes a remark of Jung's which is certainly to the point: 'Columbus, by using subjective assumptions, a false hypothesis and a route abandoned by modern navigation, nevertheless discovered America.' 'Das Capital' still

gets home. Carew Hunt, who loves it not, calls it 'one of the most important books ever written'.

(4) Revolutionary Strategy and Tactics

Dialectical method, materialist philosophy, historical materialism and labour-value economics: these constitute the main elements of Marxist *theory*. But of course, and this is my fourth point, they mean less than nothing unless they are put into practice. The purpose of philosophy, as Marx said, is not just to understand the world, but to change it. There must be complete unity of theory and practice. Marxism means a knowledge of revolutionary theory and tactics and acting thereupon. Real knowledge *must* mean action. The cat's knowledge of the mouse is revealed by its springing upon the mouse. But of course the mouse has to be there first! Marxists do not believe in playing with revolution. There must be a revolutionary situation. It is when the inner contradictions of capitalist society reach a breaking point that a party thoroughly trained in Marxist principles and absolutely disciplined can take control, and by its correct theoretical grasp of the forces *actually at work in the real world* can lead the proletariat to victory and expropriate the expropriators. All this can be illustrated from the history of the October Revolution in Russia, but time will not permit of our doing this. Indeed there are *many* important things which must be left unsaid. There is the whole development of Marxist theory and practice by Lenin and Stalin in such matters as the rôle of the Communist Party, the Communist theory of the State, and the strategy and tactics of the policy of 'Socialism in One Country'. Very significant too are Lenin's teaching on imperialism as the last stage of capitalist society and Stalin's teaching on nationalism. What I have tried to do is to lay down as simply as possible the strictly *basic* elements of Marxism and these alone. But once again let me emphasize it is not the bare theories of Marxism which create a revolution. History itself brings the situation to a head by the actual development in the real, material world of a crisis in productive forces, and their conflict with political and social superstructures now unable to cope with the situation. Then, and then only, can a disciplined and thoroughly educated Marxist party guide the course of events and replace capitalism by scientific socialism.

When I was in Moscow last summer, I had a long discussion with a leading professor of Marxism. In the course of our talk he said to me, 'The two most powerful forces in the world to-day are Christianity and Communism. What might they not achieve for the good of humanity and for peace if they could work together?' But in Britain most people regard Christianity and Communism as two mutually exclusive entities upon the same plane, both competing for the allegiance of the world.

Here, however, there is a certain confusion of issues. We can, of course, think of Christianity and Marxian Communism as two opposed

world-views, two philosophies, two theories, two faiths competing for men's minds all over the world. But this is not all. Christianity teaches that 'faith without works is dead', and Marxism equally insists on the unity of theory and practice. Both creeds therefore demand embodiment, and embodiment not merely in the lives of isolated individuals, but corporately and socially. Now it is easy to point to the embodiment of Marxism in state forms, economic systems, and a definite way of life. It is quite another story when we come to Christianity. Christians have lived under a wide variety of economic and political systems, and still do so in our own days. To take the economic side first—the Christian Church was born under the régime of slave-holding Roman imperialism. At another period we find it living under and entangled structurally with feudalism. The beginnings of capitalism were denounced by the Church, but Tawney's classic, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, describes the steady retreat of the earthly legions of God before the empire of Mammon over two and a half centuries. 'When the Rev. David Jones was so indiscreet as to preach at St. Mary Woolnoth in Lombard Street a sermon against usury on the text, "The Pharisees who were covetous heard all these things and derided Christ", his career in London,' he writes, 'was brought to an abrupt conclusion.' More than two hundred years later yet another economic system was born in Russia, and after a period of bitter conflict Christians still not only 'live and move and have their being', but are in a far healthier state than they were under the half-developed capitalist régime of pre-revolutionary days.

There is of course a similarly wide diversity of *political* systems under which the Churches have lived: monarchy, aristocracy, oligarchy, democracy, dictatorship—as well as periods of sheer chaos. With regard to the relations of Christians to the state in general, we have seen first Christians outlawed and persecuted by the state, and then under Constantine patronized by the state. Christianity in country after country became the official ideology, and every form of oppression, intellectual, moral and physical, has been used in the name of law and order and sanctified by the Churches at one time or another. Even where Churches are not officially established they often allow themselves to be used as the cement of society rather than the leaven in the lump.

As the missionary of Christ therefore goes out to preach the Gospel to those who are not Christians, it is indeed a tormenting question if he be asked how exactly does it work out in practice. An intelligent enquirer will say, 'You call the Western nations Christians. Well, the first duty of a Christian is to love God, and according to your catechism the first action which this love inspires is worship. Why then do 90 per cent of the population of Britain normally stay away from church? The second commandment is that you should love your neighbour as yourself. How is it then that you and the Americans (another Christian nation) can give so

little to uplift the poor of India and so much for making weapons of mass destruction? Christ gave you the command "lend hoping for nothing", yet your whole economic system is based on "lend hoping for 5 per cent". Your bishops at the Lambeth Conference of 1920 told you that one of the most pressing tasks of the Church was to demand a fundamental change in the working and spirit of your economic life, under which service and not profit should become the dominant motive. What have you done about it? The Cross may shine above the dome of St. Paul's, but you know that the banks and offices below, less prominent on the skyline, are the real centres of the city's life, and that they themselves are in the grip of economic laws which they are not free to alter. You tell God twice a day that it is he alone who fights for you, yet never in your history have you Christian nations spent more on armaments during peace-time. St. Paul said that men are God's offspring, but how do you treat coloured folk even in Britain—I will not speak of South Africa or Arkansas?'

The Christian missionary has no easy task as he confronts such questions about the practical embodiment of Christianity. As for the whole theme of exploitation of backward peoples, the record is too vast and too well-known for me to repeat it here.[1]

Of course, there *are* other sides to the picture. I would be the very last to deny it. But how do the two sides balance up? I remember well an old Indian patriot at a crowded meeting in Bombay in the days of the British Raj, ennumerating to his audience, entirely Indian save for myself, the benefits of British rule, but I have to confess that the bulk of the speech was devoted to the *other* side of the story, to the theme of kicking us out as swiftly as might be! It is how it looks to the *other* fellow that matters.

We Christians have indeed much to repent of. After fifty years there are words of the brave Father Gregory Petrov to Metropolitan Antony which might easily have been written to-day. 'After nineteen centuries of Christian preaching there were, and there are at best, but individual Christians . . . there is no *Christianity*. . . . The relationships of nations with one another are completely contrary to the spirit of the Gospel. . . . The populace is fooled and sucked dry in order to promote monstrous massacres and to pile up weapons of destruction. . . . What is the difference between this and the behaviour of pagan states?'

To sum up this aspect of the situation. As the Christian missionary and the Marxist propagandist preach their respective creeds to that part of the world which as yet acknowledges neither the Cross nor the Red Flag, the former has certainly in one respect a goodly heritage to share

[1] We are not unaware of 'the thin red line' of Christian radicalism all through history, but the 'outsider' is quite unaware of it and Christian missionaries rarely put this forward prominently.

with his hearers. Where he speaks of what Christ means to the individual, of God's forgiveness, of the life which is hid with Christ in God, of victory over death by Christ's resurrection, of the possibility by the grace of Christ of turning evil and suffering into occasions for glorifying God —where he preaches of *this* he has something that no rival creed can give. But when it comes to the embodiment of his faith in corporate life, it is no longer a question of a goodly heritage, but rather of a *damnosa haereditas*, which at times looks like sinking the Ark of God.[2]

We now turn to the Marxist emissary as he also confronts the world with *his* message. The first thing he notices before he preaches is that two-thirds of the world's population is hungry. (This elementary and horrible fact one might imagine should be basic to *anyone's* thought about the world, but that is far from being the case.) It is, I repeat, largely a hungry world, and it is also ill-clad and quite abominably housed. On top of this it is badly supplied with both doctors and hospitals. To crown everything, only a minority can read or write. If you try to do anything about this appalling state of affairs you find you have no capital to build up the heavy and light industries and to modernize agriculture, apart from which you can do nothing to raise the standard of life of a population which is also multiplying at a prodigious rate. Recently *The Observer* told us that even if Mr. Nehru's Five-Year Plan reached its objective (buttressed by some not very lavish British and American loans), annual consumption per head would only be increased from £20 to £23 per annum. The corresponding figure per head per annum for Britain is £240.

The grinding poverty of Asia must be seen to be believed. I can see now the people living in hovels constructed of rags, flattened-out kerosene tins and all kinds of junk, in which it was impossible to stand upright, and surrounded when the rains were on by pools of filthy water—conditions in which the R.S.P.C.A. would not allow you to keep a pig in Britain. I remember the first time I had to pick my way by night between the bodies of men on the pavement of a suburban road. They were lying there with only a blanket each and the hard stones for bed, either because they were in fact homeless or the tenements where they lived were so stifling and over-crowded that a pavement under the night sky was preferable. I have also stood outside a respectable European house beside the body of a dead rickshaw coolie who had literally worked till he dropped. . . . Anyone who has been in the East could multiply tales like that and far worse. I only give them as illustrations because in my experience statistics do so little for the imagination. Western propaganda—the propaganda of the *Christian* West do not forget — means

[2] Professor Butterfield in *Christianity and History* has some stern things to say about Christianity's alleged social and political achievements.

nothing much to such people. These half-starved people who can neither read nor write are completely unmoved by a call to fight to preserve the blessed freedom of being able to choose either the *Daily Mirror* or the *Daily Express*. The subtleties of British and American two-party democracy, where for decades on all the *real* issues there has been a bi-partisan policy are quite lost upon him. So when the Marxist tells the dispossessed and disinherited that they have 'nothing to lose but their chains', he is right. The words of 'The Internationale':

> 'On our flesh too long has fed the raven,
> We've too long been the vulture's prey'

may sound faintly ridiculous when sung by well-fed, fully employed trade-unionists in the welfare state, but for more than half the world's population they express just one of the simple facts of life. It is a language they can understand. Forty years ago Lenin won the Russians on the slogan, 'Bread, Land, Peace'. This is still music in the ears of hundreds of millions. While we repeat piously, 'Man shall not live by bread alone', these people have not yet had the luck to get beyond the prior truth that without bread men shall not live at all. When to the unblushing materialism of propaganda about how to reorganize life so as to get bread the Marxist adds an equally forthright message about brotherhood and breathes into it a warm human spirit of humanity, he is wellnigh irresistible. (There are no Little Rocks in Russia or China!) To quote from another issue of *The Observer*, 'two-thirds of the world are far more concerned with their attempt by a twentieth-century industrial revolution to raise their perilously low standard of life. Unless we become involved in that revolution, we are missing the real point of the second half of the twentieth century. The Russians have grasped this'. And as the writer goes on to say, while the Russians 'know how to represent their aid as a fraternal gift from a pioneer and partner in the great struggle of taming nature, our aid too often seems only the patronage of the rich to the poor'—or, as he has previously remarked, a move in the Cold War to prevent the Marxists getting in first!

Another point. As Carew Hunt says, those who are always playing down Soviet achievement do a great disservice to their own cause. Our Press from time to time presents 'finicky' criticisms of various lines of Soviet consumer goods in the laudable attempt to fan the flame of anti-Communist ardour. They would be better advised to view this matter of what Communism has achieved from a wider angle. What interests the hungry majority of the world's inhabitants is not whether there is better chromium plate on a Ford than on a Pobeda, or some other equally niggling question, but the fact that in Russia a solid increase in living standards has been achieved by a once poor, illiterate and industrially backward people, the liquidation of their illiteracy, the immense growth

of health services, and, *above all*, the staggering things done to uplift the Central Asian Republics. To stand and talk with a young Indian in the streets of Moscow, especially if you have seen the sorrows of India for yourself, is to know the immense strength of the Marxist appeal when its blue-prints have begun to take concrete shape.

In Russia, and more and more also in China, the disinherited majority of mankind see achievements built on a theory which claims to be scientific and which gives to hope a solid basis. Science is certainly a word to conjure with, especially among those not science-trained. To be told that out of meaningless suffering and need there is an egress, that the *actual forces at work in the real world* can, if scientifically directed, bring freedom from want and fear—this is indeed good news. It is in a fact a gospel.

The Marxist emissary can also say with the Christian missionary, 'Blessed are ye that hunger now for ye shall be full.' With a different meaning, you say? Yes: but it is a meaning related to brute facts.

Which of these two missionaries will win? I do not claim the gift of prophecy. Contingency is in any case one factor in history. There is, however, one certainty. As Berdyaev once wrote: 'Whatever happens the future belongs to the working-class: it is inevitable and it is just.'

I have also two other convictions. William Temple said that Christianity is the most materialistic religion on earth. Somehow, we've got to make that evident by deeds. Christ fed the multitudes when need required. We must insist that Christian governments do the same, and if they will not, their pretension to the name Christian must be exposed. The worship of Mammon and force must be shown for what it is.

And that goes for all Labour Parties, and Social Democrats, too! It is time those who preach about 'crisis' and 'committal' made their words come to life in the real world, where plenty for the few and misery for the many is still the rule.

Finally, once and for all, let us go back and read again the prophets of Israel. The Israelites were a chosen people if ever there was one, and what did the men who saw God and dreamed dreams of a better world have to say to them? What also did they say of Cyrus and many other movers of history who knew nothing of Israel's God? 'I girded thee, though thou hast not known me.' I had a friend who put those words under a portrait of Lenin. . . . Perhaps he was right!

PRESENT PROGRESS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

By Canon C. K. Sansbury, D.D., Warden of St. Augustine's College, Canterbury

I

It is sometimes said that the 19th century was the period when the call of the Holy Spirit to the Churches was to go into the far corners of the world and proclaim the Gospel, while in the 20th century the call of the Holy Spirit is an ecumenical one—to draw together in the one fellowship of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, Christians across the world now so often separated into different and sometimes competing denominations and communions. Like all generalizations, it has its measure of truth, even if it is not the whole truth.

The 19th century was certainly the period of discovery, of the opening up and settling of new lands, of the impact of Western civilization upon the ancient lands of the East and upon what was then called darkest Africa. Representatives of the Western nations travelled to the ends of the earth as explorers, traders, emigrants, scientists, exploiters and philanthropists. Discovery was followed by commerce, commerce often by arms, and whole sections of the world came to be parcelled out, as great parts of Africa still are, between the nations of Europe.

Among those who felt an impelling urge to go overseas were missionaries of the Gospel. If the material and commercial and military sides of Western civilization were to be introduced into these far distant lands, then surely there was an urgent call upon Christians to take the spiritual heritage of the West also to countries overseas. Other motives no doubt inspired many to give themselves to the missionary cause—the desire, for instance, of those brought up in the current Evangelical tradition (which taught eternal damnation of all who had not accepted Christ) to rescue as many as possible of the heathen from so awful a fate. But too much can be made of that motive. The Evangelical tradition at its best is one so full of grateful, adoring love of Christ the Saviour 'who loved me and gave himself for me', that it cannot forbear to pass on the good news. 'Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel'—that is the authentic note.

So through the 19th century the great missionary expansion of the Church took place. The Roman Catholic Church sent out thousands of priests, religious lay brothers and sisters, doctors, nurses and educationalists, and still today she can count on the absolute devotion of hundreds and hundreds of men and women who are prepared to go for life to every land under the sun to which admission is possible. Let us never so concentrate on the non-Roman part of Christendom that we forget that in country after country it is the Roman Catholic Church which has the greatest numbers, sometimes outnumbering all other Christians put together, often well in advance of the numbers which the largest non-Roman communion can claim.

Along with that splendid and continuing missionary service and sacrifice of the Roman Church has gone the corresponding missionary undertaking of the non-Roman churches. If centuries of state domination or alien rule made it impossible for the Eastern Orthodox Church to share in this task—or even to envisage it—on any large scale, it is nevertheless worth noting that the Russian Church established under the Archbishop Nicholai a mission to Japan which until the time of the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 was at least as successful as the Anglican missions in that country.

For the rest it has been the Churches which have passed through and emerged from the Reformation which have carried the burden of missionary service in all lands. In some cases that responsibility has been fairly and squarely on the shoulders of every member of the Church, for it has been the Church as Church which has undertaken the work of proclaiming the Gospel overseas; in other cases—and the Church of England is a notable example of this — the responsibility has rested not on the official Church which only too often has shown a lack of any real enthusiasm for 'foreign missions' but on missionary societies, some of which in past days have sat remarkably loose to ecclesiastical authority or direction.

Through this great nineteenth and (we may add) early twentieth century outpouring of manpower and money in sacrificial service and giving, the seed of the Gospel has been sown, the Church has been established and today we can see what we sometimes call the Younger Churches growing up. How about their situation in this year of grace 1958?

II

We must note first three factors which are at work in many different lands, all of which effect the environment in which the Church's work has to be done.

The first is the decline of Western moral prestige and influence. In the 19th century the Western missionary went whether he liked the idea or not, as a representative of the civilization which was clearly in advance in many respects of all others. Western scientific inventions, Western education, Western political institutions, Western liberal ideas of justice and equality before the law, based in part on Europe's Christian heritage and in part on its inheritance from Greece and Rome, placed the missionary in a position of prestige and gained for the Christian message a hearing from many who had come to despise their own traditions and to applaud everything from the West as good. Two world wars and a catastrophic depression between them have gone far to disillusion many in Africa and the East on the subject of supposed Western moral superiority. Nevertheless the economic and industrial 'know-how' which have hitherto been practically a monopoly of the West are recognised by these peoples to be

necessary if countries attaining or approaching independence are to solve their age-long problems of malnutrition, disease and poverty, and to take their place among the family of nations in the modern world. That technological knowledge they will accept from either side of the Iron Curtain, their decision being based on which side they think will supply the knowledge with the fewer political strings attached.

The second factor of which we must take account is the revival of the traditional culture-patterns and religions of the East. I need not say much of this, for other lecturers at this Conference will have adequately covered the ground. Suffice it to say that in all the lands of recently attained independence from Morocco in the West through the troubled area of the Middle East and the Indian Sub-Continent to Burma and Indonesia in the East, we find new nations, in reaction from their former colonial status, taking fresh pride in their ancient traditions and seeking a spiritual inspiration for their new national life in the revival of their historic faiths, whether it be Islam or Hinduism or Buddhism. Just how far these revivals are truly religious is, I think, open to question, but at least in Mahayana Buddhism, there seems to be a genuine recovery issuing in missionary fervour to spread abroad the knowledge of the way of Gautama as the way of peace for mankind.

Thirdly, there is the ever-present lure and menace of Communism. Has the West, I wonder, yet really grasped the significance of the fact that in the past decade China's six hundred millions have come under the domination of Marxist-Leninist dialectical materialism? It may be doubted of course, whether Chinese peasants (or the peasants of any other country for that matter) have grasped or will grasp the complex theoretical basis of Marxism, compared with which the formularies of Chalcedon are as simple as a child's alphabet, but the peasant does not judge by theory. Half-starved, often in debt, at the mercy of grasping landlords and scheming middle-men who make all the real profit in his hard-earned produce, he is concerned only with results. Communism has solved many of China's problems; peasants in other lands hear, and they know it has made China a great nation once again. Can it do the same for their countries? It is not without significance that the one province in India which has a Communist government is the one with the most Christians. If a Congress Government cannot bring about social justice, the populace argued, let us see what Communists can do.

Where does the Christian Church stand in all this maelstrom of events? How do Christians fare in these changing patterns of national life?

III

No one answer can be given which will apply in so many varied situations. In Japan the Church prospered in the post-war era when 'demokrashi' became a national parrot-cry, but it has been the new syn-

cretistic cults dating from the 19th century which have expanded most. In China the Church has rejected entirely its 'colonial' past, but appears to be continuing its life and work with no little success.

In the Indian Sub-Continent the Church is feeling the pressure of revived Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. In India particularly there are modern syncretistic movements which show all the sponge-like qualities so characteristic of Hinduism. They can absorb Jesus into a pantheon, but they reject with lofty contempt the Christian claim that there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we can be saved. The 'scandal of particularity', inseparable from any true understanding of the Gospel, is here at its greatest.

Unlike Indonesia where the Dutch Reformed Church has done one of the few successful pieces of missionary work among Moslems, the Middle East has always proved a difficult and unresponsive area for the Christian message and Christians remain still a handful so far as converts from Islam are concerned. They find themselves today in an environment of fanatical and turbulent nationalism.

Africa shows examples of missionary work that in some areas have produced Christian nations. Uganda is one such. Here and in Nigeria are to be found all the problems of nominal Christianity, together with many new problems created by the prospect of self-government and independence in the not distant future. Further, as Africans develop a continental consciousness, the ever-increasing repressions resulting from the ruthless pursuit of apartheid in S. Africa begin to have their repercussions elsewhere. Black-white hostility can spread easily north to other areas of the Continent where more enlightened race relationships at present exist.

Despite these differences, however, certain characteristics are shared by all the so-called Younger Churches outside the Roman allegiances. All have been founded from the West, all have received the Gospel in Western thought-forms, all have learnt to build their churches, to order their worship and to plan their Church life, largely on Western models. Many are still dependent on financial help from the West, many still retain a considerable amount of Western leadership, most are small groups in lands whose people are overwhelmingly of another religion and another culture. It must never be forgotten that the Christian population of India is only 3% of the total and of Japan less than half of 1%. Moreover, the increase in the number of Christians throughout the world is not proportionate to the increase in the world's population. The ratio of Christians to non-Christians in the human race is in fact declining.

So far I have given you, I am afraid, a rather discouraging view of the present situation of the world-Church. I have done so deliberately, because the addresses we hear from missionary deputations not unnaturally stress the other side and sometimes get the total picture out of proportion. The temptation when preaching or speaking on behalf of a missionary society

to tell a success story (which after all is a much better money-raiser) is considerable and we need here a balanced picture. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to paint the picture in too dark colours. With all its weaknesses and difficulties and disappointments the great missionary expansion of the past 150 years has brought into being a Church which is now world-wide. It has produced great national leaders, whether we think of Aggrey of Africa, Bishop Azariah of Dornakal, D. T. Niles of Ceylon or T. Z. Koo of China. It has brought into being a great chain of hospitals, dispensaries, schools and colleges from Foural Bay College in W. Africa to St. Luke's International Hospital in Japan. It has its roll-call of saints, heroes, confessors and martyrs, whether we think of an Indian mystic like Sadhu Sundar Singh or of those in the past few years who have braved the horrors of Mau Mau without flinching and despite the lapsing of many have remained faithful unto death. Across the world there is a Christian movement which is an integral part of the present-day scene. It is there—and it cannot be left out of account by statesmen, social planners, educators or others who are concerned to estimate fairly the forces at work in modern society.

IV

We must now look ahead and ask what are the priorities for this world movement of Christianity. What are the things that must take precedence in any sound strategy for the world-Church?

The first is surely the training of national leadership. That phrase is, I know, open to criticism. It can suggest too easily the technique of the War Office Selection Board or courses in personnel management. It can overlook the fact that the truest Christian leadership springs from wholehearted committal to Christ, who carefully distinguished between the spirit which should animate his disciples and that which marked the kings of the earth in their exercise of authority.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to know what other phrase to use. For as we survey the Church's history down the centuries, we find that at the great turning-points in its story, at the moments of development and growth, great men and women were raised up by God with gifts appropriate to the occasion—prophetic vision, theological understanding, qualities of statemanship, personal holiness, missionary zeal. If that was so in the past, it will surely continue to be so in the future—and certainly no greater need in the world-Church exists by any human calculation than that in every land there should be raised up those who can take the lead in their own country and their own culture. The ordained leadership of the Church everywhere needs to be of the highest quality, consisting of men of clear vision and great sensitivity who can guide their churches wisely in these days of rapid social change.

For that reason we must be glad at the increase in the number of 'nationals' among the Bishops at the recent Lambeth Conference. It is

good indeed to see the percentage of non-Anglo-Saxons steadily increasing. More than ability to rule a diocese wisely, however, is required. There is an urgent call for Christians of deep faith, who are also thoroughly versed in the religious and philosophical heritage of their lands, to be in the profoundest sense Christian interpreters, to do for their people what the author of the Fourth Gospel did so marvellously for his Greek-thinking readers at the end of the 1st century in his completely fresh portrait of the Incarnate Christ.

It is significant in that connection that Mr. John D. Rockefeller should recently have donated no less a sum than two million dollars for theological education in such areas as Africa, Asia and Latin America and that American mission boards should have matched his gift with another two million!

Perhaps also I may be allowed to mention at this point St. Augustine's College, Canterbury, within our own Anglican Communion, one of whose aims is precisely the further training of clergy from all parts of our Church for the better fulfilment of responsible leadership through a threefold fellowship of common worship, common study and common life.

Here may I record an impression left on my mind—and I think that of others—by the Evanston Assembly four years ago, namely, that the most articulate, the most original, the most authentic Christian voices speaking from the Younger Churches at that Assembly were not Anglican voices. Somehow it seems that we have dragged behind, partly perhaps by an excessive caution in the development of a national episcopate in the past, partly by training leaders too much in an English or American idiom. We glory in the breadth of our tradition at home and we have not silenced our rebels—perhaps they would have no Modern Churchmen's Union, if we had!—but we have not been so good in raising up and giving heed to rebels overseas, to men who out of deep concern for the outreach of the Gospel in their culture are prepared to criticize ruthlessly a good deal of the paraphanalia of Anglican Church life which is in no sense essential, but simply part of our traditional English inheritance. Only as the leaders in the Younger Churches are sufficiently emancipated to be able to distinguish between the essential Gospel and the incidentals of the particular ecclesiastical tradition in which they have received it, only as they possess a first loyalty to Christ and his universal Church and yet at the same time share deeply the national and cultural aspirations of their country—only so can the Churches of Africa and Asia cease to be regarded as outcrops of Western cultural imperialism and become racy of the soil.

Racy of the soil—that brings me to the second element which in my view is essential in any worth-while strategy for the future. Given the right leadership, the Church in each land must seek to baptize into Christ that which is most natural as the expression of worship and reverence and joy in the art, the music, the architecture, the social customs and festivals

of the people. Sometimes the first missionaries are criticized for their wholesale condemnation of much that was dear to the people among whom they worked. No doubt they made their mistakes, but often it was essential at the beginning that Christians should make a clean break with practices and art forms that only too often were deeply infested with pagan or other non-Christian associations. Now after half a century or longer it is possible to look at these things more dispassionately, just as it was easier for our forefathers of the 17th century to take a balanced view of the Reformation controversies than it was for the first generation of Reformers.

It is important, however, that this business of becoming racy of the soil should not fall into the danger of nostalgic romanticism. Many of the new nations are reviving their traditional cultural patterns only in so far as they serve the purpose of modern national aspiration. It is their place in the modern world about which men and women in many areas of Africa and Asia are primarily concerned. And it is either the struggle to attain what they believe to be their rightful place or the upheavals caused by the first attempts to live as independent nations which occupy the centre of the stage. It is here that becoming racy of the soil also must find its realization. And the tragedy is that often it is not doing so. In many areas of Africa for instance, the newly emerging national leadership consists of men almost all of whom have received their education in mission schools and colleges. Yet their cry is that almost nothing they learnt under Christian auspices has relevance as they seek to tackle the political and economic problems of their lands. Time and again the Christian Gospel has been presented solely in terms of its message to the individual—and little has been done—or apparently is being done—to develop a Christian sociology.

V

All this involves—and here I come to the third item in the list of strategical priorities—a change in relationships between the Older and the Younger Churches. The mother Churches of the West have to recognize that their daughters are growing up. The day is past when decisions could all be made in London or New York or Basle or Berlin and those at the receiving end could be expected to welcome whatever came in money, manpower or policy with open arms. The meeting of the International Missionary Council at Whitby, Ontario, in 1947 looked forward with post-war optimism to a new partnership in obedience between Older and Younger Churches, in which it was believed that the most testing days of the Christian mission lay behind. By the time of the Willingen meeting in 1952 the tone was more sombre. The same ideal remained but in those crucial five years China had gone Communist, the whole foreign missionary enterprise in that vast country had come to an abrupt end, and missionaries exiled from their field of work had spent much time analysing the causes of this apparent catastrophe. No wonder that the Willingen

Report should have as its title 'Missions under the Cross', no wonder that a statement by delegates from the Younger Churches at that meeting should ask the searching question, 'Are missionary societies and younger churches ready now to face the radical changes in traditional policies and the sacrifices which such a new initiative demands?

One reflection of this process of growing up is to be seen in the proposal for the Integration of the Inter-national Missionary Council with the World Council of Churches, which occupied the attention of the Central Committee of the W.C.C. at New Haven, Connecticut in August 1957 and of the I.M.C. at its Ghana Assembly at the turn of this year. At first sight, the proposal suggests just some vast piece of ecclesiastical bureaucratic planning far removed from the essentials of the Gospel. But behind it is not only a desire to bring order into areas of work where there is at present overlapping, but also a deep-seated urge on the part of many of the Younger Churches, not least in Asia, to have a Church-to-Church relationship with the mother-Churches of the West, such as they possess through their common membership of the W.C.C. rather than a mission-to-Church relationship which seems to them implied in the particular organization of the I.M.C.

Similar influences are at work in the Anglican Communion. The family of Anglican Churches round the world, not unlike the British Empire, has come into being very largely 'in a fit of absence of mind'. By that I mean that those who first planted our churches and mission stations overseas had no conception of what would result in due course from their labours. There was no such thing as a world strategy and the various 'sending churches' as missionary societies acted for the most part in independence of each other and often resented the suggestion of co-ordination. Since those early days much has been achieved and Anglican Churches such as those of China and Japan as C.I.P.B.C. have been able to weld together the work of various churches and missionary societies.

But there are still unsolved problems. What can we think, for instance, of a situation in which the American-founded missionary district of Liberia exists right in the middle of the province of West Africa and yet does not form a constitutional part of it? How can we regard the similar situation in the Caribbean, where the American missionary districts have no official relationship to the Province of the West Indies, or of the situation on the Continent of Europe, where the Bishops of Gibraltar and Fulham look after British-founded churches, while an American bishop supervises American-founded ones, including a so-called pro-Cathedral in Paris?

Beyond that, what about our total distribution of resources in manpower and money? Since the second World War the balance of political and economic power as between the United States and Canada on the one hand and Great Britain on the other has changed significantly—and the

alteration is felt in the relative strengths of the Church of England, the American Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada. We in this country find ourselves struggling in an age of ever-rising costs to maintain a far-flung front line across the world that is almost beyond our strength, while our sister churches across the Atlantic, particularly the American Church, are in a position of greater influence and financial power than ever before. That fact is recognized by many of the churches overseas who now frequently address requests for help, not to 15 Tufton Street or 6 Salisbury Square, but to 281 Fourth Avenue, New York—the headquarters of the American Church's National Council, or to 604 Jarvis Street, Toronto, headquarters of the Canadian Church. If anyone doubts that, let him examine the number of bishops who found it expedient to travel to or return from the Lambeth Conference via North America!

All this means that a common thinking out of strategy has become essential. How is the American Church, for instance, to assess the many appeals for help that come to her Overseas Department? What is the right priority as between e.g. the Continent of Africa, when immense developments towards nationhood will take place in the next twenty or thirty years and South America, which the Lambeth Conference Committee on 'Progress in the Anglican Communion' describes as 'the neglected Continent' and 'a great field for evangelistic work' (ii, 71 & 72). What is the best strategy for S.E. Asia, where so many of the Churches dispersion are to be found, and where the Anglican Communion is represented by dioceses of S.P.G., C.M.S. and American foundation?

It was such questions as these which led the Lambeth Conference of 1948 to recommend the creation of an Anglican Communion Advisory Council on Missionary Strategy. Unfortunately, no funds were provided for its work or for its members to meet—and, in fact, it has only met twice, once at the time of the Mineapolis Congress of 1954 and once at Lambeth in 1957 in connection with a meeting of the Lambeth Conference Consultative Body; nor has it always been consulted over such major matters of Anglican Communion strategy as e.g. the creation of the Jerusalem Archbishopric and the Middle East Province.

Yet such a body is urgently required, and Lambeth 1958 has made positive proposals for putting the Council on a firmer and more official basis with proper representatives of both Older and Younger Churches, the necessary financial provision and a full-time secretary.

Some may see here the beginnings of a process which will lead in the end to the creation of an Anglican Curia and may fear that we are on the way to a Canterbury Papacy. Others will emphasize that the Council 'is advisory and cannot settle policy' (ii, 70); they will point to the fact that in every sphere we are moving from the national to the international level—witness NATO, the Council of Europe and the proposals for a European

Common Market; and they will say that the Papacy is, in any case, not an objection to a primary *inter pares*, but to the dogma of infallibility and all that goes with the conception of the Pope as the Vicar of Christ.

If the Anglican Communion needs to be able to think out a combined strategy for all its member-churches, by the same token the Church of England needs a greater measure of co-operation in its own overseas missionary enterprise. At present there are eleven 'recognized' missionary agencies included on the Overseas Council of the Church Assembly, most of which will represent particular ecclesiastical traditions within the Church of England. One of the results of this in the past has been the creation of monochrome dioceses in many parts of the world—and that surely is always a loss; for (in my view at least) Anglicanism's only *raison d'être* as a separate Christian Communion overseas is to present to the world the spectacle of Catholic and Reformed insights in creative tension, and always fertilized by the spirit of reason and sound learning.

Happily to-day relations between the societies both at home and on the field are greatly inspired. Since the publication of the Report 'Growing Together' in particular there has been notable advance. But the process needs to go further yet. The Overseas Council is at the moment exploring ways by which it can be more effectively a form in which the missionary societies can consider common problems together—and the societies have welcomed the Overseas Council's initiative in this matter.

Some means too is needed whereby the relationship of the Church of England with her daughter-Churches overseas may be more closely associated with the official life of the Church in this country, as that is expressed in e.g. the Church Assembly. The desire for a Church-to-Church relation instead of a mission-to-Church relation is just as much felt among the Younger Churches of the Anglican Communion as elsewhere—and it becomes imperative when a Younger Church becomes self-supporting and no longer dependent on regular grants from a missionary society. As this increasingly takes place, so the increased significance and status of the Overseas Council should be recognized. If the missionary societies operating collectively through the Overseas Council may be thought of as the Church of England's 'Colonial Office', the Overseas Council must also be recognized in its own right as our 'Commonwealth Relations Office'.

VI

Lastly, there is the need to recognize what Bishop Stephen Neill has called 'frontier situations' and to make provision for what he terms 'flexible ministries'. I referred at the beginning of this paper to the often quoted phrase about the nineteenth century being the era of missionary expansion and the twentieth the era of the ecumenical movement. It is no doubt right that we should spend a good deal of time assessing the missionary movement of the past, that we should seek to reorder the

relationship of Older and Younger Churches, that we should work together on schemes of reunion such as that which has come to fruition in S. India as those others which may well become actualities in the not distant future in N. India and Pakistan and in Ceylon. But if we are doing a good deal of re-equipping, regrouping and fresh training in the rear, it is only that having done so we may be the better fitted to wage the battle for Christ on the front line. In his book *The Unfinished Task*, from which I have culled the two phrases that form the title of one of the chapters, Bishop Stephen Neill says of great city populations 'It has come to be increasingly recognized that it is useless to talk about bringing these people back to the Church. They have moved away from the Church, or perhaps have have never been seriously conscious of its existence. It is for the Church to follow them and to make their acquaintance in the places where they live and work' (p. 65). He is writing of a problem as acute in Johannesburg as in Jarrow, in Bombay as in Birmingham. The settled parish ministry with the faithful gathered round the pastor is a classic pattern of Christian life which can never be superseded. But it needs drastic supplementing in this day of vast population increase, of rapid industrial development, of revolutionary changes in centuries-old patterns of life.

We should remember that the Roman Catholic Church has been able to forge ahead in many areas, just because it regards itself as the Church of Christ and so need not bother about the problem of Christian disunity. Again, one of the most significant developments of the past-war era has been the flooding of many parts of the world with evangelists mainly from the United States, representing fundamentalist sects of varying degrees of crudeness, who have been forging ahead, just because they see one thing only—the need to proclaim the Gospel of Salvation to those who have not heard it or who in their view have not heard it aright. Having little or no sense of the Church as part of the Gospel, they too can treat with sublime indifference the Church's divisions and need spend no time seeking to heal them.

The Churches represented in the World Council of Churches need to heed these examples. Only as they too are flexible, alert, ready to try out new experiments, ready to move into new areas and confront people where they live in the new circumstances of to-day will they be faithful to their trust. That applies equally to the Older Churches of the West and to the Younger Churches of Africa and the East. And in both cases it demands a fresh understanding of the place of laymen and laywomen in the life of the Church. They are needed not just for the administrative tasks of Church finance whether at the national level or at the local level of 'taking the collection', but for witness in the places where they live and the places where they work. It is vitally important too that they should interpret that witness not just in narrow pietistic terms nor just in terms of what we label 'Church work'. Christians are needed who will go into

public service in many lands as politicians, scientific advisers, technological experts, trades union leaders. The gospel of the Incarnation must be seen bearing its fruit in a vital Christian contribution to the building of the life of the new nations on standards of honesty, integrity and unselfishness; it cannot be proclaimed by a strategic withdrawal into a Church life sealed off from the main currents of living in society around. Yet in not a few parts of Africa and in some parts of Asia that is the danger to-day.

Where in all this does the Western missionary—or fraternal worker, as he is now sometimes called in America—fit? Not as the leader of an earlier day, but as a partner. Coming from a country with a far longer heritage of Christian devotion, scholarship and life, he will have much to give. But he must learn to give in humility, he must help those he serves to distinguish between the essentials of what he brings and the trappings, he must be ready to aid in the intensely complex task of rooting the Gospel in the soil of the country, he must ever be helping the Church in which he now ministers as priest or layman to keep its eye on the frontier and to move forward in new ways at the right moment. And in all his life and service he must be ready always to learn, to receive into himself the understanding of Christ granted to another people than that to which he himself belongs by nationality, and in due course to bring that fresh grasp of the Gospel back to his own Church for its enrichment.

For to-day we have entered upon a period when, if it is still legitimate to talk of Older and Younger Churches, it is no longer legitimate to speak of sending or receiving churches. We have all in our various experience received much from Christ, we all therefore have much to give each other and much also to receive, though no doubt the proportions will vary in any given case. In partnership together, then, we must go forward to 'the Unfinished Task', knowing that the task will in fact never be finally accomplished before the final consummation, so that we must always pray while here *in via* 'Hallowed be thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven'.

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